

HISTORY *of* IRA, VERMONT

BY SIMON L. PECK
FORTY YEARS TOWN CLERK

TO WHICH IS ADDED
THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCES IN THE
GREAT WEST IN 1866-1867

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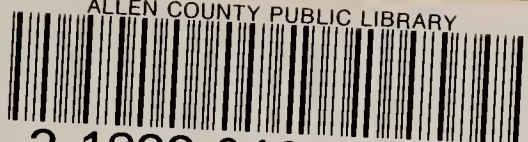
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HISTORY *of* IRA, VERMONT

By S. L. PECK

Town Clerk for Over Forty Years

TO WHICH IS ADDED

The Author's Early Experiences Upon the Plains
and the Rockies of the Great West
During the Years 1866-1867

FROM HIS DIARY OF THE PERIOD



1926

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THE COOPER CHILDREN, OF WELLS, VERMONT

Walter Bennett Cooper		Marjorie Alice Cooper
Born October 13, 1924		Born September 7, 1923

The History of Ira, Vermont

is lovingly dedicated to the Cooper children by their great-grand-father, S. L. Peck. Walter and Marjorie are great-great-great-grandchildren of Noah Peck, who settled in Ira in 1786.



S. L. PECK, Author of this book
When Senator from Rutland County,
November, 1890

PREFACE

I have often wondered when reading the history of other towns as they have been written and published, why someone had not written the history of our little town of Ira. When I looked into the matter I found that two or three brief historical sketches only had been published. They were too brief and incomplete, however, to satisfy my sense of justice to the people of Ira; hence for several years last past it has been my purpose and my ambition to write out and publish the salient features of events of greatest interest, as they have occurred during the past years since 1779, when the town was organized and commenced to take up, as other towns were doing, the management of its own affairs. I crave the indulgent judgment of my fellow townsmen, and the sequel will show how well I may have succeeded.

S. L. PECK, The Author.

Ira, Vt., 1926.

INTRODUCTION

In 1865 I removed from the town of Plymouth, in Windsor County, Vermont, and bought a farm which lay partly in what was then the town of Rutland and partly in the town of Ira, and there continued to reside until about thirty years ago, when I removed to the present town of West Rutland. S. L. Peck was constable and collector of taxes, during the first years of my residence in Rutland County, and later became town clerk. He was town clerk of Ira for forty years, and a magistrate for nearly as long, represented his town in the State Legislatures of 1872, 1874 and 1876, and was Senator from Rutland County in 1890. So far as my knowledge extends, I have never known his honesty, integrity or ability to be called in question.

O. D. YOUNG

96 years old

West Rutland, Vt., November 25, 1925

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express to the publishers his deep appreciation of valuable assistance in arranging and editing the body of the book, also to Mr. Leonard F. Croft, civil engineer, of Clarendon, for greatly assisting in locating the town lines and drafting the two cuts showing the original and the present boundaries of the town.

HISTORY OF IRA, VERMONT

EARLY SETTLEMENT

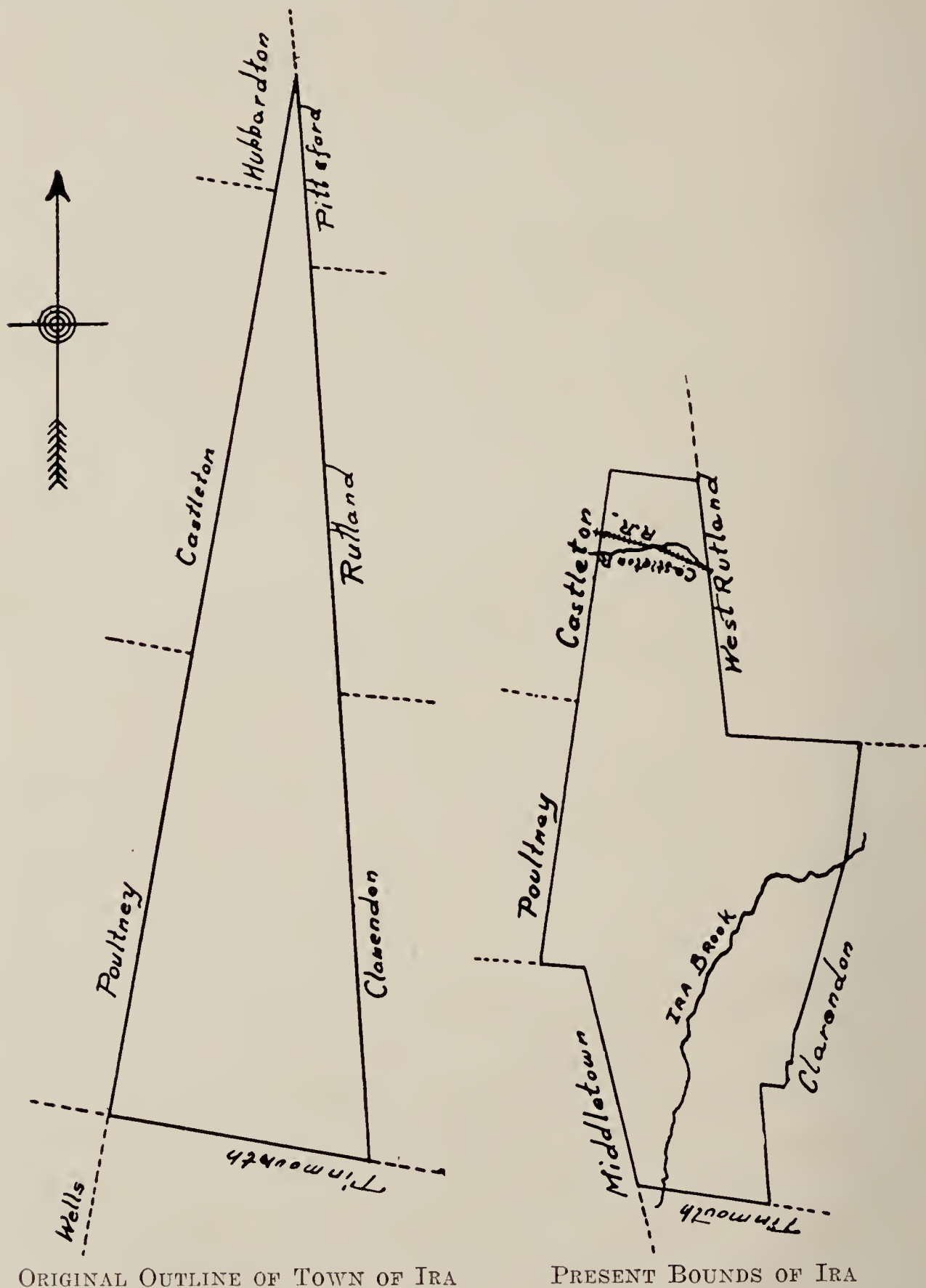
The district, now town, of Ira is supposed to have been settled as early as 1761, when men from Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut forced their way into what was then a wilderness. Clearing small plots of land, they built their primitive cabins and began the work of making homes for the families which several of them had left behind. They returned after a year or two and brought them to the shelter they had prepared for them. Much hardship was experienced by the families of these first settlers, as might well be supposed. Forging the streams where no bridges had as yet been constructed, they pierced into the virgin forest, to the homes prepared for them. But adventure was enjoyed and hardship counted but sport by these venturesome sons and daughters of that early day.

SIZE OF TOWN

In general terms a township is supposed to be six miles square, and unless some local conditions, such as the course of rivers or of a range of mountains, interpose, this rule is usually adhered to. The town of Ira, however, was doubtless a piece or parcel of land left over after other township lines were located, in some cases called gores. At the beginning of its existence as a town, in 1779, Ira was in the form of a triangle or spearhead, being about four miles broad at its base on the south, resting on the town of Tinmouth, and running north bordering the towns of Poultney and Castleton on the west some twelve miles, the extreme northern point terminating between the towns of Hubbardton and Pittsford, while upon the east its lines lay against the towns of Rutland (now West Rutland) and Clarendon.

Part of Ira was incorporated with parts of Wells, Tinmouth, and Poultney into Middletown, Oct. 31, 1784. A part was annexed to Poultney for school purposes (Laws of 1804, page 49), a part of Clarendon was annexed to Ira (Laws of 1854,

page 57), a part of Ira was annexed to Castleton (Laws of 1904, page 412, taking effect in March, 1905). See diagrams.



The town is now supposed to contain 11,166 acres, with a population, according to the census of 1920, of 295 souls.

The following figures show the population of the town for the years indicated: 1791, 312; 1800, 473; 1810, 519; 1820, 498;

1836, 442; 1840, 430; 1850, 400; 1860, 422; 1870, 413; 1880, 479; 1920, 295.

EARLY TOWN BUSINESS

The first notice of a call for a Town Meeting is recorded in Ira town records, Vol. 1, page 4, as follows:

District of Ira, May 20th, 1779.

To the inhabitants of this District, you are hereby desired and warned to meet at the house of George Sherman in said Ira at one of the O'clock in the afternoon of Monday the 31st day of this instant, 1^{ly} to choose a Moderator, 2^{ly} to choose a Clerk, 3^{ly} a Constable, and 4^{ly} transact any other business that shall be thought proper, &c., as it is the advice of the Governor & Council and at the request of 5 of the inhabitants of said town.

Viz. Isaac Clark

Amos Herick

Nathaniel Mallory

Cyrus Clark

& Levi Wood—signers

A true copy: Attest,

Isaac Clark,
Town Clerk.

A true copy of record: Attest,
Ira, April 20, 1925.

S. L. Peck,
Town Clerk.

In conformity with this warning we find that the following items of business were transacted:

Ira, May 31, 1779.

Being Mett according to the above warning which was read and the meeting opened according to law

1^{ly}—voted that Mr. George Sherman serve as Moderator for the present meeting.

2^{ly}—voted that Isaac Clark be the town [the word Clerk was omitted in the record] for the ensuing year.

3^{ly}—voted that Nathaniel Mallory shall be the Constable of this town for the ensuing year.

4^{ly}—voted that Nathan Lee, Amos Herrick & Isaac Clark be the selectmen for this year.

5^{ly}—voted that Solomon Wilder, Cephas Carpenter, and Richard Bently be our surveyors of highways for the present year.

6^{ly}—voted that Nathaniel Mallory, George Sherman, and Nathan Lee be a committee to lay out highways in this town for the present year.

7^{ly}—voted that Cyrus Clark be the fence viewer for this year.

8^{ly}—voted that Nathan Walton be a overseer for the year.

9^{ly}—voted that Daniel Adams be a howard [this word should be hayward] for the present year.

10^{ly}—voted that this meeting be dissolved.

An exact record of votes & proceedings of freemen of the District of Ira at a town meeting held at the house of Mr. George Sherman in said Ira on the 31st day of May, 1779:

Test,

Isaac Clark, Town Clerk.

We also note 52 names of the freeman of Ira that took the freeman's oath on the same date, namely: Isaac Clark, George Sherman, Nathan Lee, Nathaniel Mallory, Cyrus Clark, Solomon Wilder, Amos Herrick, Nathan Walton, Benjamin Richardson, Daniel Adams, Benjamin Bayley, jun., Cephas Carpenter, John Collins, Thos. Collins, Benjamin Bayley, Lemuel Roberts, Joseph Wood, Ebenezer Wood, Ashel Joyner, Thomas McCluer, James McCluer, Philamon Wood, Gamaliel Waldo, Silas Rudd, Daniel Haskins, Isaac Runnills, Isiah Mason, David Wood, George Sherman, jun., Ruben Baker, James Cole, John Baker, Abraham White, Joseph Wood, jun., James Martin, Thomas Martin, Hezekiah Carr, Thomas O'Briant, John Walton, Henry Walton, Cornelius Robards, Purchase Robards, Samuel Newton, Joseph Baker, John Burlingame, John Baly, Isaac Baker, Nathaniel Mason, Jason Newton, Elijah Mann, Oliver Eddy, Nathan Collins.

The foregoing completes the organization of the town, with the names of the men who were most prominent and active in forming a local board for the management of its affairs.

Unlike most, if not all, of the other towns organized in the state at that period and later, according to the early papers and records found in the office of the Secretary of State at Montpelier, no charter was ever granted the town of Ira. We refer the reader to the following taken from the State papers of Vermont, Vol. 2, page 307, issued in 1922:

Ira, A town in Rutland County. Oct. 12, 1780, the petition of Lemuel Roberts and thirty-nine associates was filed asking for a grant of the District of Ira (Mss. Vermont State Papers, 21: 187). A grant must have been made, for Nov. 9, 1780, the Governor and Council (11: 59) fixed the amount of the granting fees and the time for their payment at June 1, 1781.

The granting fees being unpaid Oct. 20th, 1783, a committee of the General Assembly, to whom was referred the question of the right of the District of Ira to be represented, reported that inasmuch as the district was represented in the convention that formed the constitution, and had since been represented and taxed, the district continues to be allowed a representative. The report was accepted (Ms. Vermont State Papers 22: 56).

Two years later, however, Oct. 25, 1785, the following report was adopted:

The Hon. General Assembly, now convened: Your committee appointed to confer with his Excellency the Governor respecting the granting fees of the town of Ira find that the said Town was granted in Oct., 1780—that a charter was to issue on the granting fees being paid, and that the greatest part of said proprietors have as yet neglected to pay any part thereof, although five years have elapsed since said grant, therefore it is the opinion of your committee that a time be allowed s^d proprietors to pay the fees, and upon their neglect a charter be made to any person that will appear to pay the same, all of which is humbly submitted by

Saml. Williams for Com.

(Ms. Vermont State Papers, 22: 107; Governor and Council, 111: 28).

Oct. 31, 1792, the report of a committee on granting fees of Ira showed that only part had been paid (Ms. Vermont State Papers, 31: 223; see also 38: 148). There is no record that the granting fees were ever paid and probably a charter was never issued.

A New York grant of 5,000 acres to Henry Van Vleck & Co. by Gov. Tryon, Nov. 6, 1772, covered lands now in Ira. (See Vermont Historical Society Collections, 1: 157.)

From the most reliable sources of information it would seem, then, that only a part of the fees required to get a charter from the state ever was paid. In that early day money was exceedingly scarce and hard to get, and most business transactions were by barter or exchange of produce grown on the farms. It appears, though, from the records and papers filed in the office of the Secretary of State and recorded in the office of the Town Clerk of Ira, that the citizens of the town were ever ready to respond when called upon to furnish scouts to defend the border from the British soldiers, and their more crafty savage allies that roamed the wilderness, so long as hostilities between this country and Great Britain continued, from 1775 until the signing of the treaty of peace, Sept. 3, 1783.

EARLY INDUSTRIES

In those pioneer days almost every household was a manufacturing plant where the clothing for the entire family was made to order, with the possible exception of hats, boots and shoes, and for these articles no one need leave town to be fully equipped. John Brown was accustomed to go from house to house during the latter part of summer and early autumn and see that the feet of the family were duly protected for cold weather, while Caleb Lincoln, who lived in the house now occupied and owned by C. J. Mehuron and Hallie Lincoln, followed the same craft and reared and supported a large family, all of whom have long since passed away. Hiram Colvin owned and operated a carding-mill establishment in the building now owned by F. F. Lincoln near the Riverside cheese factory. Here the wool was made into rolls, so-called, from which the nimble fingers of our grandmothers spun the yarn. They then knit warm woolen stockings and wove other warm garments for all the members of the family to wear. We may be assured that no shoddy was woven into their wearing apparel.

James Porter also had a boot and shoe shop in a small building which stood across the road opposite the Baptist parsonage.

Captain Daniel Graves operated a tavern, as they were then called, in the house where Clark Potter now resides, one of the old-time landmarks of the town. It was established as a tavern by Daniel Graves in 1807, and being on the main thoroughfare between Rutland and Troy, was very popular during the early part of the 19th century. The June trainings and Fourth of July gatherings added to the local popularity of the house. The town meetings of the town were warned to assemble at Graves' Tavern also for several years prior to 1854, when the old brick church was made over into a town hall and high school building.

In 1833 Daniel Graves sold out the property to his two sons, George and Harvey Graves, who continued the tavern stand. The Graves family also conducted a tannery, a hattery, a potash manufactory, and a boot and shoe shop, engaging

quite a force of employees and making of Ira valley a busy place, but the coming of the railroad to Rutland swept all these industries out of town. The Graves brothers sold out their interest in the hotel property, George Graves having established the business of tanning hides in the north part of Rutland. The various business enterprises of the Graves family were discontinued when they sold out. The house changed hands several times between 1833 and 1854, when it was bought by Julia A. Fish, who in 1867 sold it to Enos C. Fish, sheriff of Rutland



OLD GRAVES TAVERN
Now occupied by Clark Potter

County. Sheriff Fish used it as a farm for a good many years, until his removal to West Rutland, then leased it until sold to F. Potter. The present occupants have been owners since 1908.

A tavern was also maintained in the building now owned and occupied by E. S. and Hiram Merithew.

A sawmill was operated by a man named Russell on the river near the dwelling house of C. J. Mehuron, a short distance above the bridge that crosses Ira brook. The Wilkinsons also had a sawmill on a small stream that crosses the farm now owned by John L. Smith. It stood about one-fourth of a mile west of the Smith dwelling house, at that time owned by George Wilkinson, who, with his sons George and Whipple, was an expert millwright. Two of George Wilkinson's grandsons fol-

lowed the same craft and supervised the erection of the Ripley marble mills at Center Rutland, when the elder Ripley first started that immense business now controlled by the Vermont Marble Company. These brothers were George W. and Don A. Wilkinson, who were unexcelled as millwrights in their time.

When the railroads came, or soon after, these rural enterprises disappeared almost as if by magic. The spinning wheel and the family loom disappeared, and can now but seldom be found in the attic of some old country farm house. Flax, which



HOUSE USED AS A TAVERN ABOUT 1810
Now owned by E. S. and H. Merithew

was once grown on many farms to make the summer garments of our ancestors, has entirely disappeared. Great flocks of sheep once grazed upon our hillside farms and the voice of the shepherd calling "ca-da-ca-da" might have been answered by the responsive bleat of a thousand sheep, but it has been hushed by the lapse of years that have intervened. Another kind of stock has taken the place of the flocks, and the dairy cow rules supreme upon our Ira farms.

Hezekiah Horton operated a blacksmith shop which stood on the opposite side of the road from the house of C. A. Cramton. In addition to shoeing horses he ironed sleighs and wagons, made by Andrew Moore in the cheese factory building now owned by the Cheese Factory Co., Inc. Here in later years Warren Curtiss followed the wagon-making trade. George Peck and Henry

Gorham at one time occupied the same building for the same line of work, but some thirty years ago George W. Curtiss began the making of cheese in the same shop, and continued the business successfully up to the time of his death.

Deacon Thomas Tower occupied the Horton blacksmith shop for several years and was succeeded by his son Lyman Tower, who owned it at the time of his death. The shop was afterwards rented to different individuals, until a few years ago it was torn down. Martin West built another shop farther up the



GEORGE W. CURTISS.
Cheesemaker



DON A. WILKINSON
Millwright

road, on the property now owned by Mrs. Julia Cramton, where for some time he shod horses and repaired carriages, but that too has disappeared. No regular blacksmith shop remains in town. Clark Collins does some repairing of wagons and occasionally a bit of custom blacksmith work upon his farm some two miles farther south on the main road, but the most of his blacksmithing is for his own convenience.

Some 75 years ago James C. Smith owned and operated a carriage shop in the old carding shop near the lower end of the village, originally owned by the Colvins. He sold the shop to Justus Collins, who transformed it into a sawmill, the power for which was generated by a turbine water wheel. When F. F.

Lincoln, of Middletown Springs, became the owner of the mill, he changed it over into a cider and grist mill, which he operated for some time, until he became interested in some mill property in Tinmouth. Since that time the mill has stood idle, and it is now fast going to decay.

About the year 1815 Joseph Perry was engaged in the building of wagons upon the premises now owned by Mrs. Julia Cramton. He had the reputation of making his joints so close and his wood was so well seasoned, that the spokes in the wheels of the wagons he made never would work loose though they might stand in the sunshine a hundred years.



IRA STORE AND WAYSIDE AUTO STAND
Home of Charles A Cramton, 1926

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IRA
AND SOME OF ITS EARLY SETTLERS

Ira is located in the central part of Rutland County. Along its western border the Taconic range of mountains looks down upon all the valleys lying to the east. Bird mountain, lying about eight miles west of Rutland city, has an elevation of some 2,500 feet. Herrick, lying a little to the southeast, is 2,661 feet above sea level. Both of these mountains were named for the men who visited this region in an early day, and Pitcher Mountain, lying to the east of Ira valley, with much less elevation, was named for Colonel Pitcher, who for a time made his home here near its western base. Ira brook rises in the south part of the town, flows in a northeasterly direction and joins Furnace brook in Clarendon a short distance below the Clarendon Gorge.

With the exception of the valley along the stream, the hill farms are stony, but the soil is good and some of the best farms in town are among the hills. Several small streams fed by springs help to furnish a reasonable amount of water for farm purposes. On Castleton river, which rises in West Rutland and flows westerly through the north part of the town, there are some excellent farms.

The timber consists mainly of maple, beech, birch, ash, basswood, spruce and hemlock. A large quantity of sugar was formerly made from the maple, but cane sugar has become so plentiful of late years, and the cost of suitable equipment for making maple sugar is so great, that the industry has largely declined.

A good quality of limestone, from which the very best of lime was once produced, can be found near the eastern base of Herrick Mountain. Bird Mountain is largely composed of a conglomerate quartz filled with pieces of granite about the size of kernels of corn. This formation is a puzzle to the geologists.

The first marriage recorded in town was that of Isaac Clark to Hannah, daughter of Governor Chittenden, the governor himself performing the marriage ceremony on the 5th of September, 1779.

The pensioners of the Revolution were Peter Parker and David his brother, Jason Newton and Nathaniel Wilmarth.

David Parker was here in 1800, and Peter Parker came some years after. There were some peculiarities about these two old men. They were natural poets and great story tellers.

Jason Newton came to Ira in 1782 and might well be called the patriarch of the town. He had three wives and raised a family of 17 children, but large families were the rule, rather than the exception, in those days.

Isaiah Mason came to Ira in 1780.

Preserved Fish came in 1790. He was born at Dighton, Mass., November 5, 1770, the son of Robert and Abigail (Hath-



RESIDENCE OF S. L. PECK
Built about 1800 by his grandfather, Noah Peck

away) Fish. In August, 1791, he was married to Abigail Carpenter, who was born in Rehoboth, Mass., and died in Ira, Vt., October 10, 1849. For a good many years the birthplace and date of birth of Preserved Fish were not known, but these facts, taken on the authority of one of his great-great-grandsons, C. A. Fish of Middletown Springs, Vt., ought to be conclusive. Preserved Fish was a mason by trade and in the course of a long life accumulated a princely fortune for those times. He was a magistrate for more than forty years, represented the town thirteen years, and reared a family of eleven children, ten boys and one girl. Many of his name continue to be residents of Ira to this day.

Daniel Giddings, one of the earliest settlers, planted a half-acre of corn and in this small field killed thirteen bears.

Noah Peck, 1st, settled in West Clarendon (now Ira) from Barrington, Conn., in 1786, built a log house and afterwards the dwelling now occupied by his grandson, S. L. Peck, now eighty years old.

A TRAGEDY OF IRA BROOK

*For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.*

The following paper, written by S. L. Peck, was read July 4th, 1921, at a dedication and memorial service held upon the public green near the Ira Baptist church, on which occasion Attorney B. L. Stafford and Judge Leonard F. Wing delivered addresses appropriate to the occasion. A free public dinner was served by the ladies of Ira to all present.

From the time when it had the honor of bearing a name at all, up to the thirty-first day of May, 1779, Ira was called the District of Ira. On that day, at the residence of George Sherman, wherever that may have been at the time, was held the first town meeting of Ira. At that meeting 52 citizens took the freeman's oath. George Sherman was chosen Moderator; Isaac Clark, Town Clerk; and Nathaniel Mallory, Constable. Nathan Lee, Amos Herick and Isaac Clark were chosen selectmen, and Solomon Wilder, ——— Carpenter and Richard Bently, surveyors of highways.

So we can see that the *good roads movement* in this town started in early, but as no mention is made of any bridges the presumption is that they had their bridges already built. Whether that is so or not, it is evident that the cement bridge lately constructed does not stand where the bridge of an earlier day once stood, which was some ten or twelve rods lower down stream and near where the highway passes at the present time. The stream probably changed its channel at the time of the great freshet in 1811, when this valley was swept clean of bridges, trees and some houses that stood near its banks, also a blacksmith shop, and in fact everything within reach of the angry waters of the stream.

The writer can recall, when he was a lad, hearing his father say, that during that storm *his* father was standing on the brow of the hill above where Elmon Coombs now lives, and saw forest trees two feet in diameter, with their roots sticking up out of the water and their tops submerged, go reeling and tumbling downstream in the wild rush of water. At that time there were no fatalities, at least none were ever recited in his hearing, but in 1847 this valley was visited with another flood and one life was lost.

On a hot July day in the year 1847, in the early afternoon, clouds began to show in the southwest, and an occasional rumbling of distant thunder could be heard, which culminated in a heavy down pour of rain. This was followed by another, and still another thunder shower, and a deluge of water began to sweep across the head of this valley and on eastward toward the Green Mountains. These thunder showers, following each other in rapid succession, soon began to swell Ira brook and its several tributaries until grave fears were expressed by many for the safety of the two principal bridges situated thereon, namely the one lately reconstructed with cement, and its companion, about three-fourths of a mile lower down the stream.

At a little past four o'clock, or soon after the schools were dismissed in the afternoon, the rapid rise of water and flood-wood pressed so heavily against the upper bridge that the timbers yielded, and the whole structure, with all the accumulated debris, went tearing downstream, and striking the lower bridge, swept that also clean from its abutments. Piling some of the wreckage out in the highway below the Mehuron place, the flood went sweeping onward toward the lower lands below the mouth of Clarendon river. At some place in the highway between the lower schoolhouse and the Brown place, so called, Elizabeth Brown, a cousin of the writer, a school girl of some seven years, was overtaken by the rush of water and carried downstream to her death. Her body was found next day by searchers, with one hand reaching up from under the sand. The writer remembers attending her funeral, and being raised up by his mother to see her pale and lifeless face as she lay in her casket.

Like other streams of equal size, Ira brook lures the angler to seek the speckled trout, unsurpassed as a table luxury. But my mind reverts to the solemn service it has rendered to the people of this historic Baptist stronghold. For more than 137 years this stream has been visited from time to time by those professing faith in a crucified and risen Redeemer, in obedience to His command to be baptized, thus typifying death to sin, burial in the liquid element, and resurrection to newness of life in all their after-years. Parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren have all alike passed through the cleansing waters of this ever-flowing baptistry.

And so for all the eventful years since 1779 as a town, and since 1783 as a church, has this little stream been ministering to the needs of the inhabitants of the Ira valley, a valley that as yet has never experienced the shame of harboring a capital criminal among its law-abiding citizens; which pays one hundred cents on the dollar of its honest obligations; and is sufficiently progressive to build, with some state aid, the first cement and iron bridge in this part of the county, a structure that will answer the purpose for which it was constructed, when our great-grandchildren shall become old and feeble, like the writer of these lines.

IRA'S MILITARY RECORD

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

The pioneer settlers of Ira were frequently exposed to the raids of the Indians, and the depredations of the British soldiers during the Revolutionary War, and at an early day took measures for self-protection. For example, on the 20th of August, 1780, a special town meeting was held in the house of Joseph Wood and among other measures the following vote was carried: "Voted that the town raise for three months, two men to scout on the frontier, except sooner discharged, that the town pay said men for their services two pounds per month, that each man pays according as he stands in the list. Test., Joseph Wood, Town Clerk." Feeling also ran very high here against the Tories, as witness the forcible expulsion from the community of the outspoken John Lee. The Lee brothers, Nathan and John, were among the earliest settlers in Ira, about 1770, though not the very first. John Lee sympathized too much with the mother country in the Revolution and was obliged to leave town on account of his peculiar views. His farm of 324 acres was confiscated and sold to Thomas Collins of Lanesborough, Mass., for one hundred pounds English money. It is now owned by the heirs of the W. L. Cramton Estate.

Attention is directed to some of the incidents of that memorable period. On page 469 of the Revolutionary War Rolls of Vermont, we read as follows:

A pay roll of Capt. Lemuel Roberts' Company of militia in Col. Thomas Lee's Regiment in the service of this State, commencing the 21st of October:

Captain Lemuel Roberts
Ensign Cephas Carpenter
Sergt. Asahel Joiner
Sergt. John Collins
Corp. Isaac Reynolds
Corp. Henry Walton
Isaiah Mason
Nathan Lee
George Shearman
Edward Bailey

Nathan Collins
Daniel Adams
Benjamin Baily

The occasion for this call was only a few days' service, but the bill for the time spent was duly allowed and paid by the State Treasurer.

All of the above were Ira men.

We find on another occasion commencing the 10th and ending the 11th day of June, a hasty call to arms when danger threatened. Capt. Lemuel Roberts and ever-ready minutemen of Ira responded as follows :

Capt. Lemuel Roberts
Ensign Cephas Carpenter
Sergt. Ashel Joiner
Sergt. John Collins
Isaiah Mason
Nathan Lee
George Shearman
Edward Bayley
John Bayley
Nathan Collins
Isaac Runnels
Oliver Walton
Henry Walton
Amos Herrick

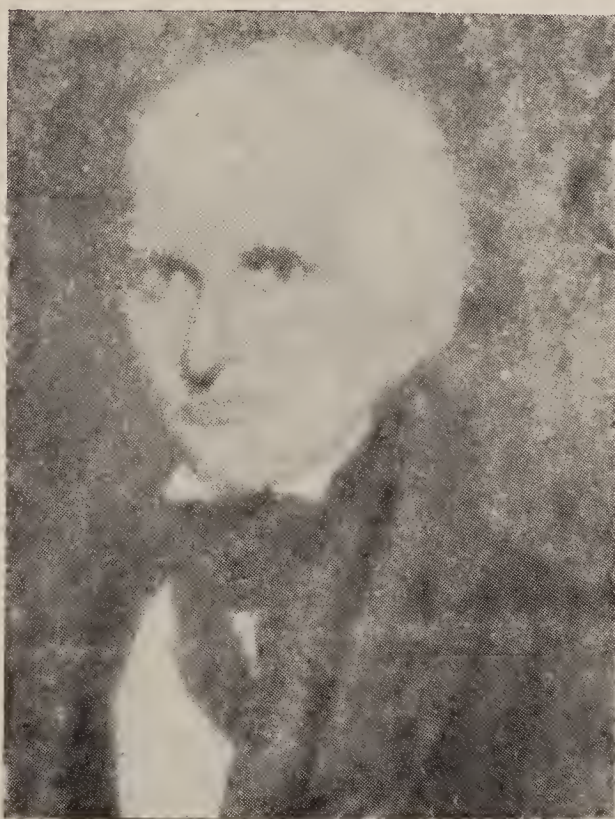
See page 378 of the Revolutionary War Rolls of Vermont. This small company was also composed of Ira men.

Capt. Lemuel Roberts was at one time a member of Ethan Allen's regiment and a man of more than ordinary courage, ability and skill, as shown in the report of a special committee of the State Legislature, October 26, 1784 :

* * * that Lemuel Roberts has ever been a fast friend to the liberties of mankind, and a faithful servant in the military line to this State in particular, and has repeatedly risked his life in a most hazardous manner, and that he has undergone excessive hardships in his being several times taken by the enemy and escaping from them too tedious to mention; and that said Roberts is now a captain of the militia Company in the town of Ira.

THE WAR OF 1812

The War of 1812 brought six minutemen, volunteers from Ira: Jason Newton, Jr., Seth Russell, David Johnson, Hosea Goodspeed, Nathaniel Tower, and James Hunter. The following either went to Plattsburg or started for there when the call was made for men: Matthew Anderson, Edmund Whitemore, Thomas C. Newton, John Mason, Russell Fish, Leonard Fish,



WILSON CARPENTER

Oil painting of an early settler of Ira,
on Grand List of 1793, died in 1855.

Leonard Mason, Jacob Butler, Abel Spencer, Noah Peck, Barton Collins, Nathan Collins, Jr., Smith Johnson, Freeman Johnson, Edward Carpenter, Israel Carpenter, John Hall, Isiah Mason, Nathaniel Wilmarth, Wilson Carpenter, and Omri Warner. Preserved Fish received a dispatch one Sunday bidding him start immediately for West Clarendon to notify the people of the call for soldiers at Plattsburg. He found most of the inhabitants at meeting, but on receiving the news they at once dispersed and made active preparations so that on Monday morning early they started with stores of provisions for the battle.

THE CIVIL WAR

The martial spirit was not lacking among the citizens of Ira during the days of the Civil War. The scream of the fife and the roll of drums echoed back among the hills of the little town during those trying days of the nation's peril. Warren Curtiss and William Rounds were the fifers; Dr. Persons, a veteran of the War of 1812, his son Collamer, who later enlisted in the Vermont Cavalry, and Elwin White, now of West Rutland, and past eighty years of age, handled the tenor drum sticks; and Isaac Weaver beat the bass drum. All except Mr. White have long since passed away.

The following is a list of the names of the Ira men who participated in the Civil War, with the several branches of the army to which they were attached:

Volunteers for three years credited previous to the call of October 17th, 1863, for 300,000 volunteers: John L. Bachelder, Co. I, 7th Regiment; William Coagle, Co. B, 2nd Regiment; Henry T. Davis, Co. G, 5th Regiment; Henry Flagg, Co. B, 9th Regiment; Silas Giddings, Co. F, 1st S. S.; Edward Haley, John Haley, John Hunter, Co. G, 5th Regiment; Benjamin Mann, Jr., Co. B, 9th Regiment; Joseph W. Parker, Co. G, 5th Regiment; Charles W. Peck, Harrison J. Peck, Co. F, 1st U. S. S. S.; Collamer Persons, Co. H, Cavalry; Henry H. Peters, Co. D, 7th Regiment; Levi Plumley, Co. I, 7th Regiment; Rollin Russell, Co. B, 9th Regiment; Sylvanus L. Whitmore, Co. F, 1st S. S.; Mansur W. Young, Co. B, 9th Regiment.

Credits under call of October 17th, 1863, for 300,000 volunteers, and subsequent calls: volunteers for three years, Cornelius P. Curtiss, Co. C, 11th Regiment; James H. Fowler, Cavalry; Thomas Gary, Aaron A. Savery, Co. C, 11th Regiment; Henry F. Tower, 2d Battery; William H. Walker, Cavalry; volunteers for one year, James S. Fox, Horace H. Wheeler, Co. F, 9th Regiment; volunteers re-enlisted, Henry T. Davis, Co. G, 5th Regiment; Henry H. Peters, Co. D, 7th Regiment; Levi Plumley, Co. I, 7th Regiment; volunteers for 9 months, Charles P. Bateman, Co. K, 12th Regiment; Lawson E. Barber, John T. Boor, George Brown, Gilbert Hanley, Aaron Hinkley, Arthur E. Morgan, Cyrus Russell, Emmett M. Tower, Co. H, 14th Regi-

ment; Henry C. Tower, James E. Wetmore, Co. H, 12th Regiment.

Paid commutation: Smith Johnson, J. W. Thornton, George W. Tower, Thomas A. Tower.

The following from the pen of Hon. H. J. Peck, late of Minnesota, describes the system employed in the early days of the Civil War for enlisting men into the Sharpshooters of the United States army service.

HOW TWO VERMONT BOYS SHOT THEMSELVES INTO THE ARMY

During the summer and fall of 1861 the Country was ablaze with excitement from one end to the other, and especially so in the little State of Vermont, the Green Mountain State, as it was called, and drums might be heard day and night in all the small towns as under the second call of President Lincoln for volunteers, companies were being enlisted for the war.

In August of that year Col. H. H. Berdan of New York obtained permission from the War Department to raise a regiment of sharpshooters, for special service, to be known as Berdan's Sharpshooters, with one company from each of ten states, making one thousand men. Col. Berdan issued circulars and advertised for enlistments, but made it necessary for the right to enlist that the applicant should be able to shoot ten consecutive bullets from a rifle, offhand, without a rest, into a ten-inch ring at a distance of forty rods.

Vermont was noted at that time for its number of good rifle shots; but this was a severe test and, taken with the requirements of examination, limited the number who might be able to get into the regiment.

Early in September it was announced that a meeting would be held at the fair grounds, in Rutland, for the purpose of giving those who desired to enlist in the Vermont company in this regiment, an opportunity to make the required target and enroll their names for the war. The shooting was to be at a circular target ten inches in diameter, at a distance of forty rods, offhand, as it was called, or without a rest.

In the morning of the day set for the test, two boys, brothers, go down from the hills with a horse and buggy, and, after hitching their horse under the Meeting House shed in the Village, with their rifles saunter down to the fair grounds, where they find a large crowd of people who had assembled to witness the shooting, which was under the

control of Wm. Y. W. Ripley, who afterwards became Lieut. Colonel of the Regiment. The rifles were heavy muzzle-loading target rifles, for at that time breech-loaders were comparatively unknown, and entirely unknown in the mountains of Vermont.

When the targets were in place and the distance measured, the elder of the boys stepped to the line and, carefully loading his rifle, commenced firing. The first shot was a little wild, but inside the ring; so were all the ten consecutive shots, many of them being almost in the center of the target. The younger of the boys then walked to the line, and, altho somewhat nervous at first, he succeeded in placing ten bullets within the ring. As each shot was fired and the target master placed a black patch over the bullet hole, in the white target, a cheer went up from the crowd, which encouraged the boys in their efforts. A great many who desired to get into this Regiment attempted to make the necessary target, the most of whom failed, but a few succeeded. A few days afterwards the order of Col. Berdan was modified so as to allow good riflemen to enlist in this company, and it was soon filled, the test having been found too severe for procuring enlistments.

What became of the boys who hitched their horse under the Meeting House shed? They both enlisted and served in nearly all the big battles of the Army of the Potomac, until honorably discharged. The youngest was wounded at Yorktown, but after the war he returned to Vermont, where he became a physician, and is still in the practice of his profession at Brandon, Vermont. The elder studied law and moved to Minnesota, where he has resided ever since, and practiced his profession.

This little remembrance is of no importance now, but shows that more than fifty years ago the country to some extent was interested in the boys behind the guns.

THE WORLD WAR

In 1917, after President Wilson had wearied of writing pacifist notes to the German government, and America had fully decided to form an alliance with the other European powers to help defend the world against German aggression, this government prepared for the mobilization of a strong military force in order to assist the already depleted armies of the allies in combatting the forces of the Kaiser and driving the invaders of France and Belgium back across the Rhine.

Directions came to the town clerks in the towns of Vermont, as elsewhere throughout the country, to summon the young men between the ages of 21 and 35 years of age to appear at a place designated for each town, for preliminary examination as to fitness for military service. Twenty young men of Ira responded to the call and appeared for examination. But the idea of being drafted into the service was decidedly repugnant to the spirit of their loyalty to the nation's flag, and the cause they were called upon to defend, and without waiting for further orders seven of the boys who were not "*too proud to fight*" were enrolled and made ready to follow the flag.

The following are the names of Ira men who enlisted and left home and friends to share the perils and privations of a soldier's life: Dana Jones, Arthur Wm. Cramton, Emery Gokey, Herman Ellsworth Weaver, Arthur Gillman, William and Joseph Taggart. Five of the number faced the Hun on the field of conflict, and one of them, Joseph Taggart, fell soon after arriving at the front, pierced by the bullet of a German sniper. One other, Arthur Gillman, held to the field until a few days before the armistice was signed, when he was taken to the field hospital suffering from pneumonia and died shortly after. His body was sent home to his parents, who live just over the Ira line, and he lies buried in the Tinmouth cemetery. We have called him an Ira boy from his connection with the Ira Valley Grange and his close association with the young people of this town. During his term of service in the army he was associated with two other Ira boys, Herman Ellsworth Weaver and Emery Gokey, as members of the same rapid gun fire squad. Weaver and Gokey were badly gassed but survived to reach home, and home care and competent medical treatment have brought them back to comfortable health.

Dana Jones and Arthur William Cramton were called to service on the water, a service not so full of hardship as the land service, but replete with danger from the German sub-marines.

All of the above were members of Ira Valley Grange, except the two Taggart brothers, who at the time lived in the north part of the town.

It will be recalled that another day was set some time afterwards for the inspection of men, this time between the ages of

18 and 45 years, and not to include those already inspected, but the fortunate event of the armistice made it unnecessary to call on the latter class.

SACRIFICE

*Address before Killington Pomona Grange of Ira, 1919,
by S. L. Peck*

This is a word, the meaning of which, in a general way, is doubtless understood by all, and yet a little careful thinking may possibly help us to discover some things in connection with its meaning that may be interesting if not very profitable.

It is an old word, that, or its equivalent in the Hebrew tongue, is nearly as old as the race of man.

Moses, in the book of Genesis, speaks of the occasion when two brothers came forward to sacrifice: the one with the fruits of the earth and the fields; the other with the firstlings of his flock. And we read that the offering of the one was accepted and that of the other rejected by Deity. At a glance we wonder why this was so, but we learn by further search that one was offered with faith, while the other seemed to lack this essential qualification. We note further that the blood of the innocent lamb, which served as a type of the One whose blood was shed on Calvary, formed a constituent part of Abel's offering, while that of his brother wholly lacked this essential element.

As time goes on for the space of about 4000 years we notice that the word "sacrifice" pertained almost, if not wholly, to the religious and ecclesiastical ceremony of the Jews in offering up domestic animals of various kinds, along with doves, and possibly some other varieties of feathered creatures, down to the time of the advent of our Saviour, since which time, the Christian world, and I conjecture the Jewish, to quite an extent, has wholly discarded this material ceremony.

As believers in Him who once for all offered Himself upon the cross of Calvary, we can readily understand *why* this is so. The innocent have suffered for the guilty, and the atoning sacrifice has been made, and accepted by Him in behalf of all mankind.

However, the word has not fallen into disuse, if the ceremony has. It has taken on a wider meaning, and is no longer confined and restricted to a religious ceremony, but reaches out and embraces everyone who submits to suffering and deprivation for the sake of another, or the good of any *just* and *worthy* cause.

Parental love makes fathers and mothers deny themselves many of the comforts of life that they may give to their children the advantages of an education, or the luxuries of an enlarged estate. Nations, as such, sometimes, but not often, sacrifice men and money to aid others in contending against aggressive and unjust oppression on the part of other and stronger nations. Witness France aiding America in the days of the Revolution against Great Britain, and again witness the United States of America aiding both England and France in the sanguinary conflict going on in Europe against Germany at the present time.

It is said that words stand as the sign of an idea, and if sacrifice has any value that makes it worth while, it must be voluntary and free, without compulsion in any way. I wonder if we think of it in this light when the government asks us to conserve sugar, flour and other food used in our homes heretofore without stint in order to furnish our boys "somewhere in France" with the staying qualities of a generous diet while standing in the mud and water in the trenches facing and fighting the brutal Hun; or giving something to starving French and Belgian refugees to help them keep body and soul together; or buying W. S. S., or Liberty Bonds to the limit of our means, to help the government in the prosecution of this World War in behalf of the political redemption of humanity. If we do not submit willingly, nay gladly, we are unworthy auxiliaries of the brave boys, who are not only sacrificing the comforts of life, but, in many cases, life itself, that this world may be a safe and decent place in which to live.

Some weeks ago word came over the wires from Washington that one of the boys from Ira, Joseph Taggart, had fallen in battle somewhere in France while fighting with his comrades. In order to do the little we could to comfort the bereaved and stricken parents, we called upon the family, and as we grasped the hand of the mother of the brave boy who had thus offered his life in defence of his country's flag, with tears streaming down the cheeks of more than one, we learned, as we had never learned before, the meaning of that word *Sacrifice*.

So it appears that a son of Ira has paid the supreme sacrifice as he sleeps the last long sleep of devotion to his country's flag, commemorated by the poppies of France, in Flanders field.

THE MEMORIAL TABLET TO IRA VETERANS

In 1922 some of the relatives and friends of the Civil War veterans devised a scheme to erect a memorial tablet in town, in memory of the veterans, both living and dead, of that eventful period in our nation's history.

A private subscription paper with that end in view was circulated and quite generously supported, but as the required amount necessary to obtain a suitable memorial tablet fell short, on March 7, 1922, at the annual town meeting, the following motion was made and sustained: "That whatever sum may be needed to pay for the soldiers' memorial tablet over and above the individual pledges for that purpose shall be paid by the town."

The tablet, of bronze set in Clarendon Marble, was duly erected and properly dedicated, and bears the following names, to wit:

VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Harrison J. Peck	James H. Fowler
Charles W. Peck	Thomas Gary
Silas Giddings	Aaron Savery
Edward Haley	Henry F. Tower
George Lincoln	William H. Walker
Fayette Potter	James S. Fox
Collamer Persons	Horace H. Wheeler
Henry Flagg	Oliver E. Brewster
John Hanley	Charles P. Bateman
Henry Peters	Lawson E. Barber
Benjamin Mann	John T. Boor
John L. Bachelder	George Brown
Joseph W. Parker	Gilbert Hanley
Thomas Hunter	Aaron Hinkley
Henry T. Davis	Arthur E. Morgan
Sylvanus L. Whitmore	Cyrus Russell
Levi Plumley	Emmett M. Tower
Mansur W. Young	Henry C. Tower
Rollin Russell	James E. Wetmore
William Cogle	Albert Fish
Cornelius P. Curtiss	James Logan

VETERANS OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

Fred E. White
Donald McIntyre
Daniel F. Coombs

VETERANS OF THE WORLD WAR

Mark Hawkins

Herman Weaver

Arthur Cramton

Dana E. Jones

William Taggart

Emery Gokey

Walter Smith

Joseph Taggart, killed by a German sniper

Arthur A. Gilman, died in service, in Belgium.

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The Tablet was erected on the Green nearly in front of the Baptist church, facing the main road, and at a cost of about five hundred dollars. Close behind it stands a flagpole upon which on suitable occasions the stars and stripes are floated. It is a splendid testimonial of the subscribers and the town of Ira to their love for the boys and their loyalty to the cause for which many of them gave their lives.

THE FLAG

In 1864 or thereabouts, the Republican County Committee of Rutland County offered a large United States flag as a premium to the town that should cast the lightest Democratic vote at the coming September election. After the contest at the polls closed and the votes were counted it was found that not a single Democratic vote had been cast in Ira, and accordingly the flag belonged to Ira. The flag was brought to town on a day designated by the committee, and duly presented to the citizens in a ringing patriotic speech delivered by Col. C. H. Joyce of Rutland. The response of acceptance on the part of the town was made by S. L. Peck. After years of service the old flag is worn out and gone, but another has been presented to the town by Judge L. F. Wing, now chairman of the State Republican Committee, whose birthplace is Ira, and the same spirit of loyalty to the cause the old flag represented exists in 1925, as it did in 1861.

ORGANIZATIONS

THE BAND

In 1894 Buel Parker and George W. Curtiss organized what was then called Ira Brass Band. The services of Samuel Seff of West Rutland were secured as teacher, with the following named young men as members :

George W. Curtiss	George Lincoln
Daniel F. Coombs	Burt Lincoln
Elmon Coombs	Nathan Seff
John Flanigan	Louis Seff
Henry Gilmore	Arthur L. White
Oscar Gilmore	Fred White
Charles Gilmore	George Fish
Bradley F. Gilmore	Eugene Weaver
Grant Lincoln	Willie Whitmore

Buel Parker was shortly succeeded as leader by Samuel Seff, who gave further instruction until Charles W. Ellis joined the band. Mr. Ellis soon became expert upon most of the instruments used by the others, and was later chosen leader, holding that position until, several of the members having died or left town, the band was disbanded. During the time the organization existed it was frequently called to furnish music at memorial services and fairs held in adjoining towns.

Willie Whitmore's was the first death, in 1896, followed by that of Burt Lincoln in 1897, and George Curtiss and the brothers, Fred and Arthur White, died a few years later. George Curtiss was taken sick in 1900, while attending the Legislature at Montpelier as representative from Ira, and lived but a few days after returning home.

Daniel F. Coombs served in the Spanish-American war, and after his discharge from the army with impaired health, removed to Culver City, Cal., where his health has greatly improved and he has prospered greatly in the business of contractor and builder in that marvelously growing city.

IRA VALLEY GRANGE

The Ira Valley Grange was organized in March, 1905, by Governor C. J. Bell, at that time Master of Vermont State Grange, assisted by Mrs. L. R. Burr of Clarendon. There were 69 charter members and the following list of officers:

Master—S. L. Peck.

Overseer—C. C. Cramton.

Secretary—Daniel F. Coombs.

Lecturer—Walter C. Perry.

Chaplain—Rev. T. Ellis Jones.

Gate Keeper—E. S. Merithew.

Steward—Herbert Tower.

Assistant Steward—Cyrus Cramton.

Ceres—Mrs. S. H. Mitchell.

Pomona—Mrs. George Fish.

Flora—Mrs. Della Fish.

Treasurer—Mrs. Dolly Curtiss.

Lady Assistant Steward—Miss Grace Lincoln.

Of this list the Treasurer has served continuously until the present time, and the Master also, with the exception of one year.

Since its organization the following charter officers have been called away by death:

Governor C. J. Bell, the organizer

C. C. Cramton, Overseer

Rev. T. Ellis Jones, Chaplain

Herbert Tower, Steward

The Grange now numbers about 100 members and seems to be doing efficient work along the lines of labor for which the organization was designed.

IRA BAPTIST CHURCH

According to the "History of the Baptist Church of Ira, Vermont," the Founder appears to have been Rev. Thomas Skeels, who had preached in this part of the state, and in this town occasionally, and who in 1783, gathered together a little company of believers, and formed a Church, he being elected Pastor, Cephas Carpenter, Clerk; and Reubin Baker, Deacon.

From the records of the times, it is now impossible to determine just how many, and who would be considered "Charter members," as churches are now organized, but the membership list shows forty-two members received during the first three years, 1783-1785.

For some years after the church was started, the people gathered in private houses, for worship, and the Church records



REV. GEORGE H. WATT, 1895-6



REV. T. ELLIS JONES, 1904

TWO OF IRA'S PASTORS

(See others in History of Baptist Church of Ira, Vermont)

of the times do not mention the building of the first church, or what was called for many years the "Meeting house." This was the brick building now standing on the common and often called the Town Hall, or Grange Hall. It was erected about 1800.

The present church building was erected in 1852 or 1854. No record has been found either in the church clerk's book, or elsewhere as to the exact date, but some of the older people who have long since passed away set the date at 1852, and we are of the opinion that this earlier date may be correct. At any rate, a deed for the land upon which it stands, given to the Ira Baptist Church Association by Rollin C. Hunter, who at that time

owned the farm now belonging to the C. C. Cramton Estate, bore date of December 13, 1851. Nathan Winn of Wallingford was the architect who supervised its construction, and Bradley Fish, John Mason and Leonard Mason were the Building Committee. The cost was about \$2,000.00.

A choir gallery was originally installed in the end of this church opposite the pulpit, but inasmuch as the audience had to turn around in order to view the choir while they were singing there was a good deal of criticism and the gallery was partitioned off and the choir located at the left of the pulpit in full view of the audience. This change was made some forty years ago. The original system of warming the building was with two large stoves, one on either side near the inside doors, but modern ideas again prevailed, and about 1900 a furnace was installed and the stoves removed. About the same time the old windows were removed and memorial windows were installed in memory of some of the older and more active of the membership during the earlier years of the church's activities, most of whom had already passed away.

REMINISCENCES OF IRA PEOPLE

Ira is pre-eminently a farming town at the present date, but she has sent out into the world several men who have made their mark in life, and has never produced a capital criminal nor a candidate for state's prison.

Joseph Tower, First, came to Ira in an early day and settled upon the farm now owned by Dexter D. Day. He built a kiln and engaged in burning lime, as did also his son Joseph, and the industry has continued to the present time, although the scarcity and high cost of man power has curtailed the output to a considerable extent. The Tower family, in that early day, was a large one: Ruth, born February 20, 1776; Ellennor, September 8, 1779; Elizabeth, March 3, 1781; Lydia, July 9, 1783; Mason, July 25, 1785; Deborah, September 23, 1789; Lucy, September 21, 1797; Amos, February 21, 1799; Edmund, December 15, 1800; Althedy, January 17, 1803; Ithamore, November 15, 1804; and Henry, November 26, 1805.

The Giddings family settled in West Clarendon in the part set off to Ira in 1854. They were people of considerable influence in that part of the town largely owned by the Lincoln brothers, Grant and George. Some of the family owned the farm where O. D. Young formerly lived, and many of the children were born there. They sold the farm to the Lincolns and removed to Castleton nearly 40 years ago.

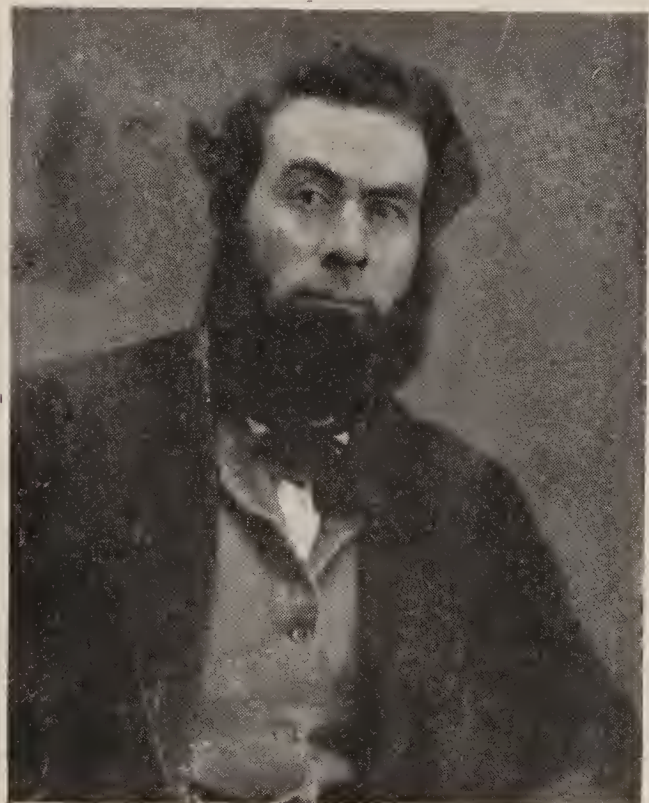
Nicholas Montgomery Powers, son of Richard Montgomery Powers, born in Pittsford, August 30, 1817, married Lorette, daughter of Russell Fish of Ira, and settled in Ira. He owned the farm lately held by Gilman Gilmore, now deceased. In 1858 he sold this Ira farm and removed to Clarendon, where several of his family still reside.

Mr. Powers entered upon mechanical pursuits very early and became a successful bridge builder. He constructed several complicated bridges on the leading railway lines of the country, among them the celebrated bridge over the Susquehannah River from Perryville to Havre de Grace, Md. He also designed and built the longest single-span wooden bridge in the world, situated at Blenheim, N. Y.

Joseph Chapman, First, was an early resident of Ira, living here about 1830 or earlier. In 1851 he sold the farm later owned by N. M. Powers and Gilman Gilmore and removed to West Clarendon, where he died. Mr. Chapman was known as an upright, dependable citizen, ready to maintain his honest convictions, and inflexible in refusing to yield where yielding would compromise his ideas of what was exactly right. One of his daughters, Marcia, married Enos C. Fish, whose son, Enos C. Fish, Jr., was late Sheriff of Rutland County.



ENOS C. FISH
Father of Sheriff Enos C. Fish



JAMES C. BROWN
Born 1819, died 1905

TWO OF IRA'S STRONG MEN

Enos C. Fish, Sr., and James C. Brown, stone mason by trade, were known as the strongest men ever raised in Ira. The senior Fish, with Willard Ross and Jeremiah Thornton, formed the board of selectmen that engineered the affairs of the town during the trying period of the Civil War.

Welcome Cole came to Ira from Scituate, R. I., about the year 1800. He was an early emigrant from England, a land surveyor by profession, and the Ira land records attest his frequent employment by interested owners in the adjustment of farm lines. He was equally skillful as a carpenter and joiner.

The Thornton name meant much to the people of North Ira, so-called, for they accumulated large holdings of real estate back of and below Bird Mountain and for some time had their own flocks of a thousand sheep or more. During some of those years wool was worth one dollar per pound. Jeremiah Thornton, who served the town as a selectman during the Civil War, won no small distinction in securing recruits from Ira for the army. Though he was unable to look after his affairs for some years before his death, May 26, 1909, his large landed properties



RESIDENCE OF THE LATE CHARLES C. CRAMTON

were kept intact through the careful management and foresight of his wife, Phoebe Wing, a daughter of Captain Daniel Wing, late of West Rutland.

Although not to be classed as an early settler, Henry White, born about 1815 and always living in Ira, could safely be rated as one of its most respected citizens. His son, Elbert L. White, held the confidence of his townsmen to the extent that he was chosen selectman by the voters for sixteen years. Elbert L. White died September 15, 1917.

Among those whom the writer remembers as active in the local affairs of the town, social, political or religious, were the two Cramton brothers, Charles C. and William L., both of whom came to town from Tinmouth in early manhood, married

Ira women, and were from the first identified with the social and economic interests of the town.

The three Fish brothers, Lester 2nd, Leonard and Lyman W., sons of Lester and Eunice (Newton) Fish, born in Ira, were all pronounced leaders in the social and religious work of the church, and I need scarcely add that their wives gave them hearty support therein. Lyman W. served the Baptist Church as deacon for 60 years, accumulated a handsome property, but, better than that, the veneration and high esteem of all those



RESIDENCE OF ELLIS H. CRAMTON
Son of William L. Cramton

who knew him best. Both Leonard and Lester Fish were for many years closely identified with Rutland County Agricultural Society either as officials or patrons and produced some of the finest road and driving horses shown upon the grounds at the annual exhibits.

The two Day brothers, Ardin E. and Leonard W., came to town about the year 1872 and bought of J. P. Giddings the old Tower farm, now owned by D. D. Day. Their wives were sisters, daughters of Amos Wetmore of North Ira, so-called, and the four made a strong team of workers in any social or religious movement in the community.

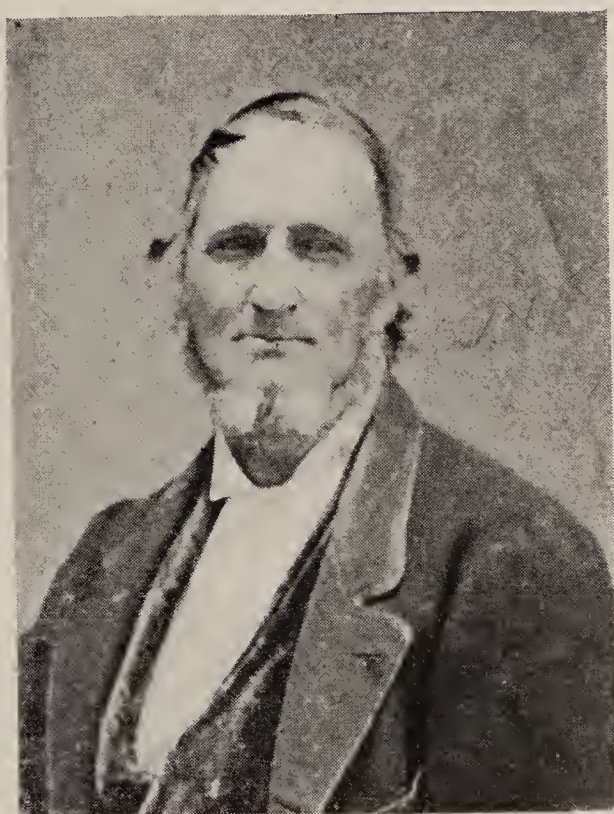
I cannot fail to speak of Smith Johnson, a leader of the choir in Ira Baptist church for many years, and his wife, who met a tragic death in West Rutland, leaping from the wagon when the horse she was driving became frightened; of Cornelius Lincoln, and his wife, Clara (Wilkinson) Lincoln, who lived to great age, Mr. Lincoln past 90 years; of John Mason, who served the Baptist church as deacon for nearly 40 years, and the town as town clerk for nearly as long, whose records, nicely written and neatly kept, are silent testimonials to the value



THE OLD TOWER HOMESTEAD
Built by Joseph Tower, 1st, about 1810,
Now owned by Dexter D. Day

he placed upon these systematic records of inestimable value to every landholder in Ira; of Leonard Mason, an early deacon of the Ira church, and his son Leonard F., who followed him in the same sacred office, and departed this life before he reached fifty years of age, and at whose grave was as large a concourse of mourning friends as was ever seen in Ira; of Willard Ross, who was sorely missed when many years ago he sold the farm now owned by W. C. Perry, retired from active labor and removed to West Rutland; of Bradley Fish, who as farmer and

financier accumulated a property inventoried at the time of his death at about \$120,000, and for many years a town official, serving as town clerk from 1861 until 1882; of his brothers, Daniel and Russell Fish, who endowed Ira Baptist church with generous sums of money, Daniel with \$2,000 and Russell with \$500. They were both members of the church when young men, and Russell up to the day of his death. Daniel removed to Lansingburg, N. Y., early in life, and at the time of his death was reputed to be worth a quarter of a million. He died child-



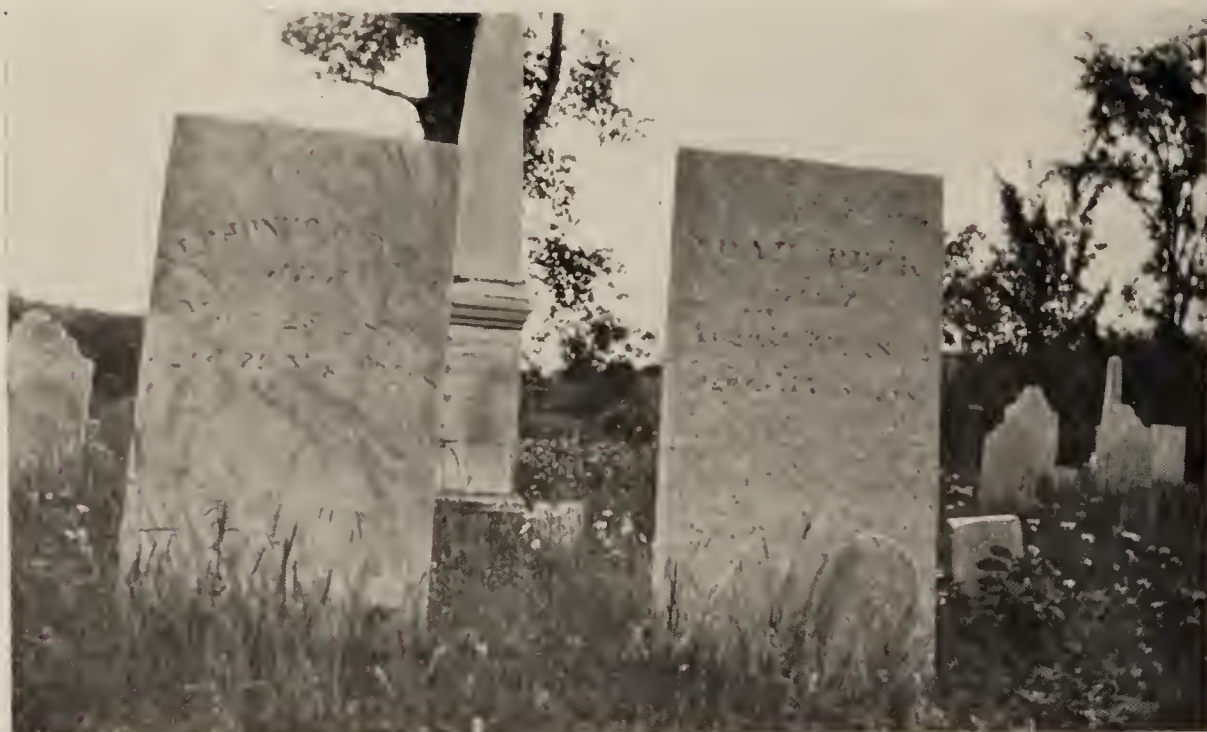
LEWIS PECK
Father of the Author

less, and his relatives in Ira were aided materially by his economy. Others worthy of mention are Joseph Tower, father and son, of the locality still called "Tower Hill," and the Carpenters, Wilson and Cephas, of whom Cephas was town clerk for several years in the early days of the town. The Cephas Carpenter homestead, built in 1786, was thoroughly repaired by Enos C. Fish, Sr., who lived there forty years, dying in 1888.

These good citizens, most of them within the distinct recollection of the writer, with many others that time and space forbid mentioning, lived lives of usefulness and passed to the

great beyond. Their memory remains green and fragrant in the recollection of those who survive them.

The founder of the Peck family in Ira was Noah Peck, who was born at Barrington, R. I., in 1765, and emigrated to West Clarendon (now Ira) in 1786. Noah Peck was twice married, first to Aura Spencer, by whom he had seven children, Mary born 1794, David 1795, Aura 1797, Hannah 1799, Betsey 1803, Noah 1807, and Sarah 1809. On the death of Aura, Noah Peck married Mehitable Yeaw, and had three sons by her, Lewis born 1813 and Alphonzo born 1817, and Daniel, the youngest. Noah Peck died August 19, 1842, aged 77 years. His son Lewis it was, that continued to reside on the farm that had been redeemed from the forest, in the old house now occupied by his son, S. L. Peck, writer of this book. Alphonzo, the next son, was blind for forty years.

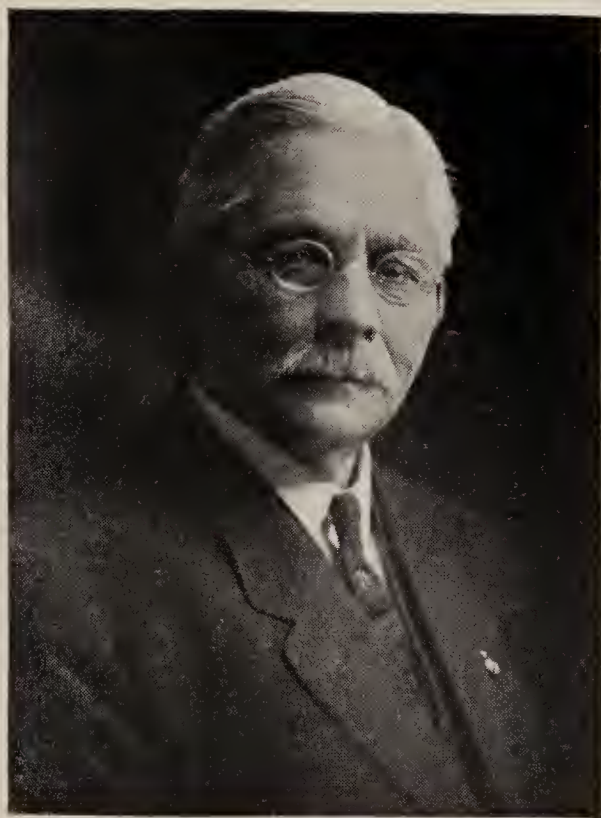


CHIPPENHOOK CEMETERY

Grave of Noah Peck, died 1837, and of his son Alphonzo

SHERIFF ENOS C. FISH

Probably no man in Rutland County has ever been instrumental in serving legal papers, in both civil and criminal suits, over a longer term of years than Enos C. Fish, late of West Rutland, and late Sheriff of Rutland County. He was elected to the office of First Constable in the town of Ira in 1862, and was continuously on that branch of service for sixty years, as Constable, Deputy Sheriff, and High Sheriff. He was first



SHERIFF E. C. FISH
Late of West Rutland, Vt., died 1922

appointed Deputy Sheriff, under William M. Field, on March 12, 1877. This appointment ran until December 1, 1878, when Daniel P. Peabody was elected Sheriff, and he was re-appointed on that date by Mr. Peabody. He was re-appointed a deputy every two years from that time until Mr. Peabody's death, when he was appointed Sheriff by Gov. Bell, on December 16, 1905. He was elected and re-elected Sheriff at each succeeding election, until, by reason of advanced age, he refused to accept the office, and Mr. Adams was elected and qualified on February 1, 1919.

Enos C. Fish was born in Ira September 11, 1836, on the farm now owned by George W. Fish, a half-brother. He was

son of Enos C. Fish, and grandson of Preserved Fish, an early settler in Ira, who accumulated an independent property and reared a family of ten sons and one daughter, all but one of whom grew to maturity, and most of whom became people of prominence. He grew up on his father's farm in Ira and attended the district schools of that early day. He also attended high school there for a time under the guidance of Philip Emerson, later U. S. District Judge, if we recall correctly, in the Territory of Utah. Mr. Fish married for his first wife Miss Clarissa Peck, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Peck of Ira, and had one daughter, Helen, who died in her young womanhood. Two years after the death of his first wife, he married Frances (Peck) Freeman, daughter of Frederick and Viola Freeman of West Rutland. Not long after, he rented his farm in Ira and removed to West Rutland, where he resided on Clarendon Avenue until his death, May 9, 1922, at the age of 86 years.

Mr. Fish was ambitious to become Sheriff of Rutland County, a goal which he gained with unexpected suddenness.

Sheriff Daniel P. Peabody met his death by accident in the Rutland depot in 1905, and the office of Sheriff of the County became vacant. The Vermont State Grange was in session at Montpelier at the time, and as soon as the news of the death of Sheriff Peabody reached the Capital a petition was drawn up and signed by the masters of every subordinate Grange from Rutland County present at that meeting asking Gov. Charles J. Bell to appoint Mr. Fish to succeed him. Governor Bell, who at that time was also Master of the Vermont State Grange, assured his petitioners that he would be glad to consider the petition favorably. Two days later a similar petition, signed by the bar of Rutland County, was received by the Governor, and the commission to that office was soon sent to Mr. Fish, and he at once assumed the duties of the office. When Henry R. Adams was elected Sheriff many years later, he immediately appointed Mr. Fish a Deputy, presumably as a compliment, and in order to be able to draw upon his experience during the many years he had served in the office. He continued to fill the office of Deputy up to the time of his death, in 1922.

Mr. Fish was a member of Marble Valley and Killington Pomona Grange, a Knight Templar, a member of Hiram Lodge,

F. & A. M. of West Rutland, and of Vermont Grand Lodge. He was chosen Master of Hiram Lodge several times and took great pride and pleasure in the work of the Masonic order. He was for many years Moderator of the Town Meetings in West Rutland, and as a presiding officer had few equals. He served the town as Representative with credit to himself and his town. Few men reared in Rutland County have led as busy a life over as wide a range of years, as Enos C. Fish, the subject of this sketch.



SAWMILL AT IRA, OWNED BY A. E. BUCK AND SON, OF ARLINGTON

AS TO THE PROFESSIONS

THE MINISTRY

Ira has never been especially noted for the great number of professional men who have been born within the limits of the town, but the quality has been good. Rev. Reuben Baker and Rev. Austin Mosher, who died many years ago, so far as the record goes, served their day and generation with fidelity and satisfaction to those whom they served. Rev. Alanson Fish died soon after he entered the ministry. The only representative of the clergy now living is Rev. Howard H. White, at present serving a large Baptist church at Lebanon, N. H. He served several churches in Vermont and was Chaplain of the Vermont House of Representatives in 1902.

THE LAW

The profession of the law had a representative in Hon. Rollin C. Hunter, who was born August 19, 1817. He was admitted to Rutland County bar. Owing to natural diffidence or from a born dislike for contention, he never tried to argue a second case in County Court, but was well read and excellent counsel as to the merits of a case. Mr. Hunter went to California during the rush for gold in '49, and secured a reasonable share of the yellow dust, but came back to Ira to marry. He bought the farm now owned by the estate of C. C. Cramton, and toiled there early and late until 1860, when he sold out to Joseph Tower, and removed to Michigan, where he died at Lyon, Ashland County, November 6, 1881. Other lawyers from Ira were Harrison J. Peck, and Leonard F. Wing of the law firm of Fenton, Wing & Morse of the city of Rutland.

Judge Leonard F. Wing was born in Ira November 12, 1893, and educated in the Rutland high school. He qualified as a lawyer in the office of George E. Lawrence and served in the World War as judge advocate in a large military camp in a Southern state. Returning to Rutland after the close of the World War, we find him busy winning his way to the confidence and high regard in which he is now held, both as a lawyer and a worthy citizen of the old Green Mountain State. No fears

need be entertained as to results in the later lifework of this youthful advocate.

Harrison J. Peck, eldest son of Lewis and Harriet (Brown) Peck, was born in Clarendon (now Ira), November 23, 1838, and educated in the common schools and at Barre Academy; was graduated from that institution at the spring term in 1861 and expected to enter college at the next regular commencement date, but the Civil War interfered with his plans, as it did with those of many other young men in that eventful period of our



ATTORNEY LEONARD FISH WING
Born in Ira, Vt., November 12, 1893,
Now of Rutland, Vt.

nation's history. The call of his country could not be turned aside, and together with his younger brother, Charles W. Peck, he enlisted in Co. F, 1st U. S. S. S., Edmund Weston, captain, better known at that time as Col. Berdan's Regiment of Sharpshooters, and the first of that particular arm of the government to be recruited for the service. He was with the army of the Potomac and with McClellan in the Peninsula Campaign. After McClellan was relieved from his command, and responsibility for further command of the army of the Potomac

rested upon the shoulders of Fitz John Porter, the second battle of Bull Run was fought. In this battle Corporal Peck was wounded and sent to the hospital, when, after examination by the hospital staff of surgeons, he was honorably discharged from the service for wounds received August 31, 1862, his discharge bearing date of October 26, 1862.

Returning to his home in Vermont, where care and comfort soon began to restore the disabled and weakened body of him who had given all but his life in defence of his country's



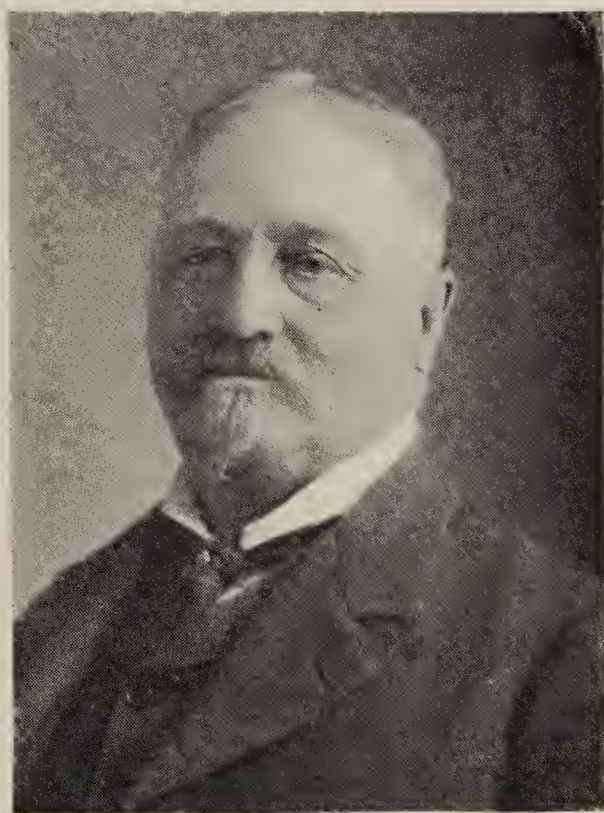
ATTORNEY HARRISON J. PECK
Late of Shakopee, Minn.
Died in California 1913

flag, he entered the law office of Judge David E. Nicholson, at that time a resident of Wallingford. After a course of reading in that office he took a course of lectures at the Albany Law School, following which he emigrated to Minnesota, entering the office of Judge Luther M. Brown, and commenced his career as a practicing attorney after being admitted to the bar of that young and rapidly developing state.

The confidence of his constituents was expressed by electing him for several terms state's attorney of Scott County and

sending him to the state legislature; but politics was not his strong point, as he was accounted one of the best criminal lawyers in the state. Something of his genius with the pen can be seen in the article printed earlier in this history, "How Two Vermont Boys Shot Themselves into the Army."

He practiced his profession in Minnesota about fifty years, and then, his health failing, went to California seeking improvement, but the reverse proved to be the result and he died there



DR. CHARLES W. PECK
Late of Brandon, Vt., died 1916

February 12, 1913. He is survived by his widow, two daughters and an only son.

His body was taken back to Minnesota and now sleeps in the soil of his adopted state.

We have written this much concerning this typical Vermont boy because so few of his early friends and associates ever get the news that filters through from that distant state.

MEDICINE

Charles W. Peck, second son of Lewis and Harriet (Brown) Peck, was born February 23, 1841, in Clarendon (now Ira), educated in the common schools and high school at Ira, and with his older brother was a student at Barre Academy at the

time of the opening events of the Civil War in 1861. At the close of the spring term at the Academy, he enlisted in Co. F, U. S. Sharp Shooters, with his older brother Harrison, and after the usual and necessary training in camp during the winter of 1862, was sent down the Potomac with the rest of the army under command of Gen. Geo. B. McClellan, to commence the Peninsula Campaign, the objective being the capture of the Rebel capital at Richmond, Va.

Not long after the army reached Fortress Monroe, McClellan sought to feel the Rebel strength in that vicinity and accordingly sent out a reconnoitering force toward Norfolk. The Berdan Sharp Shooters, or at least Co. F, helped to compose that force. They found the Johnnies, as the Rebels were called, and some desultory firing at long range took place. As usual, and thought to be advisable, the Sharp Shooters were at the front skirmish line, when Corporal Charles W. Peck received an ounce of Rebel lead in his leg midway between the knee and ankle. The statement has often been made and never disputed that a Vermont boy furnished the first blood to be shed in that very disappointing campaign under Gen. McClellan. This sent the younger of the Peck boys to the hospital and after a time sent him home to Vermont on furlough, where he spent most of the summer of 1862.

Returning to his company in the early fall, his limb commenced to trouble him to such an extent that he was honorably discharged from the service November 26, 1862, for wounds received April 5, 1862. This ended the military experience of both the Peck boys.

Determined to win his way as a doctor he re-commenced his scholastic studies at Fairfax, Vt., and finished his medical lectures at Springfield, Mass. Entering the office of Dr. A. T. Woodward of Brandon, Vt., he was an active and interested learner while riding with that pre-eminently skillful physician, until he felt competent to try his hand in actual practice alone. He married and settled in Brandon, where he continued the practice of medicine up to nearly the time of his death, which occurred April 21, 1916, at 75 years of age.

He was three times married but left no children, and all of his wives have passed away, but the present population of Brandon and those residents of the past fifty years, we feel sure, would be glad to testify of the skillful medical service and the manly citizenship of Dr. C. W. Peck.

He represented the town and served for several years on the high school board. Was a member and served for some time as chairman of Rutland County Medical Society.

TOWN, STATE AND COUNTY OFFICERS

In a paragraph previously recited it was stated that Ira had a delegate at the Constitutional Convention of 1786, but no record is found as to the name of the person. However, the delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1814 we know was James Harrington, and the same man served as Assistant Judge of the County Court in 1806-8. In 1869-70 Bradley Fish served as Assistant Judge and in 1861-2 he also served as County Senator. Leonard W. Day was chosen delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1870 and in 1890-91 Simon L. Peck was elected to the office of County Senator from Ira. Isaac Clark was the first representative, 1779. Born 1749, died 1822 at Castleton. Cephas Carpenter served as representative in 1785-6-7-9-90-1808-9. Born 1754, died 1829. He also served as Town Clerk from 1792 until 1818. He followed George Sherman, who succeeded John Baker, who served from 1780 to 1790. Cephas Carpenter lived where George W. Fish now resides. Preserved Fish served as Town Clerk 1819-1820, when he was succeeded by John Mason, who served continuously until 1861, when Bradley Fish succeeded him to that office. Mr. Fish held the office until March, 1882, when he was succeeded by S. L. Peck. Mr. Fish was again re-elected in 1883 and held the office for only one year. Mr. Peck was then re-elected and held the office until 1894, when Charles D. Mann was chosen for one year, since which time the office has been held by S. L. Peck to the present time.

The following named persons have served the town as Representative. The years are indicated, together with the date of birth of each, so far as obtainable :

Isaac Clark, 1779.

George Sherman, 1780, 1, 8, 91, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Lemuel Roberts, 1782, 4.

Joseph Wood, 1783.

John Anderson, 1800, 1, 2, 3, 4.

Isaiah Mason, 1811, 14, 23.

Mathew Anderson, 2d, 1815.

Daniel Graves, 1822.

Leonard Mason, 1826, 7, 43.

Joshua Harrington, 1828, 9.
Whipple Martin, 1830, 1, 2.
Pardon W. Wilkinson, 1835, 6.
Ozial H. Round, 1839, 40.
Russell Fish, 1841, 2.
James L. Gilmore, 1844, 5.
Amos Tower, 1846, 7.
Lester Fish, 1848, 9.
Erwin Collins, 1850, 1; born 1795.
Enos C. Fish, 1852, 3; born 1809.
Rollin C. Hunter, 1854, 5.
Bradley Fish, 1856, 7.
Carlton Giddings, 1858, 9; born 1811.
Jeremiah Thornton, 1860, 1, 2; born 1823.
Willard Ross, 1863, 4; born 1815.
Leonard F. Mason, 1865, 6; born 1837.
Amos Wetmore, 1867, 8; born 1806.
Leonard W. Day, 1869, 70; born 1830.
Simon L. Peck, 1872, 4, 6; born 1844.
Eben B. Perry, 1878, 80; born 1852.
Lyman W. Fish, 1882, 4; born 1837.
Smith Johnson, 1886; born 1830.
Charles C. Cramton, 1888; born 1851.
Elbert L. White, 1890; born 1841.
Leonard Fish, 1892; born 1835.
Grant Lincoln, 1894; born 1866.
Wm. L. Cramton, 1896; born 1852.
Cornelius Lincoln, 1898; born 1826.
George W. Curtiss, 1900.
Don E. Lincoln, 1902; born 1866.
Lester Fish, 2nd, 1904; born 1832.
George W. Fish, 1906; born 1871.
Wm. Kilbourn, 1908; born 1846.
Charles H. Peters, 1910.
Thomas W. Harte, 1912.
Harrison W. Fish, 1914.
Dexter D. Day, 1916.
Henry C. Fish, 1918.
Walter C. Perry, 1920.

Edward S. Fish, 1922.

Ardin W. Day, 1924.

PRESENT OFFICERS OF THE TOWN

Town Clerk—S. L. Peck.

Selectmen—Dell L. Phillips, Grant Lincoln, A. W. Day.

Listers—E. S. Kelley, Grant White, J. C. Parker.

Road Commissioner—By appointment, E. S. Fish.

Patrolman—Russell Fish.

School Commissioners—Robert Johnston, H. W. Fish, E. S. Fish.

Town Treasurer—Ellis H. Cramton.

First Constable and Collector of Taxes—Guy B. Fish.

Second Constable—C. C. Gilmore.

Auditors—Clayton E. Fish, Dana E. Jones, Grant White.

Overseer of the Poor—The Selectmen.

Trustee of Public Money—Mrs. Dolly Curtiss.

Town Grand Juror—S. L. Peck.

Town Law Agent—S. L. Peck.

Tree Warden—Hallie Lincoln.

Fence Viewers—E. C. Weaver, James H. Farrell.

Inspector of Lumber and Shingles—H. C. Lincoln.



SECTION OF IRA CEMETERY

The Author's Early Experiences Upon the Plains
and the Rockies of the Great West
During the Years 1866-1867

FROM HIS DIARY OF THE PERIOD

Early Experiences Upon the Plains and the Rockies of the Great West, 1866-1867

Whoever undertakes to build a ship, construct an automobile, or write a story, either true or fictitious, must needs have a starting point, a time and a place, to make a beginning, and we might as well commence our story in the town of Wallingford, Vt., in the spring of 1866. The writer had spent the previous winter as a teacher of a district school at one dollar per day, in a hamlet known as the Munson District lying to the south of that beautiful village, where some of the best farming tools ever constructed have been manufactured by the Batchellers for the past three-quarters of a century, and where the business still goes forward with undiminished energy.

The gold fever, commencing on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains in the then Territory of Montana, had advanced as far to the east as the State of Minnesota, and a good many of the citizens of that splendid and enterprising agricultural state had contracted the disease, and the only remedy seemed to be to go to the source of the contagion and, if possible, effect a cure.

Youth is venturesome, and oftentimes foolishly daring, but an enterprise of this kind is liable to involve people of riper years, who ought to know better but do not. Accordingly a stampede upon a small scale was effected and a rush across the plains of what is now North Dakota and Montana was planned by some of the most venturesome and hopeful of the citizens of eastern Minnesota.

As a matter of fact the law firm of Peck & Brown, located at Shakopee, the county seat of Scott County, Minn., contracted the epidemic and thereupon laid Blackstone & Chitty upon the high shelf, closed their office temporarily, and proceeded to organize an outfit for the purpose of crossing the plains lying to the west between Minnesota and the gold fields of Montana to hunt for and secure, if possible, a share of that yellow dust, that has become at once the bane, and antidote of most of the ills, of human life.

Whereupon the writer of this narrative proceeded to make arrangements to leave the friends in Wallingford and Ira and, turning his face toward the setting sun, join the venturesome travelers that dared to risk the journey across a region of country infested with roving bands of hostile savages, and the most extensive hunting grounds at that time within the limits of the United States.

Accordingly, about the middle of May, 1866, the writer purchased a ticket as far west as Chicago and boarded the train at West Rutland, with as light a heart and as joyful anticipations for the prospective trip as Columbus might have had when he undertook the discovery of a new continent.

The trip to the windy city was uneventful, and from there it was continued to La Crosse, Wis., by rail. The eastern bank of the Mississippi was the extreme limit of railroad travel. No engine whistle at that time had been heard from the western bank of the father of waters to the shore of the Pacific. From La Crosse we took a river steamer bound for St. Paul, Minn., and from St. Paul a smaller steamer to ascend the Minnesota River to the city of Shakopee, the county seat of Scott County, and the residence of the big brother who had preceded the writer some two years before. He had, as before stated, entered a law partnership with L. M. Brown, who, some years later, was chosen one of the Judges of that magnificent state.

It took about two weeks for these two men to organize and bring together a bunch of 150 men and some 75 wagons with two yokes of oxen to each wagon, very few wagons having only one yoke. There were only four women in the whole outfit. Many of the men had seen service in the western armies during the Civil War, and were veterans in the use of the rifle and accustomed to service as fighters against Indians, and were not easily disturbed where danger seemed to threaten. Someone had to be at the head of this enterprising aggregation of plainsmen, hunters and farmers, and my brother, H. J. Peck, himself an ex-service man, having been a member of Col. Berdan's 1st Vt. Sharp Shooters in the Army of the Potomac in '61 and '62 during McClellan's campaign of the Peninsula in front of Richmond, was chosen military commander, whose special business it was to select camping places, halt the train for the night, and start it off in the morning, arrange for defence in case of attack

by Indians and have a general oversight of every day's travel. A few saddle horses were taken along, but most of the travel was on foot. The train moved in two columns, one wagon behind another and the columns about 40 feet apart.

About the first of June, when the grass made good feed for the cattle, the train headed toward the west, and while it made no great display it certainly was composed of men that could not be easily turned aside. Our course at first lay up the south bank of the Minnesota River for about 20 miles, when we crossed at a ford and continued up the stream on the north bank in as nearly a straight course as possible until we passed between Big Stone Lake, the source of the Minnesota River, and Lake Traverse, lying perhaps a mile north, the last named lake being the source of the Red River of the North, which flows across Manitoba, its waters finally emptying into Hudson Bay. The land between these two lakes is really the watershed of North America.

One might naturally inquire what sort of loading was contained in those 75 wagons. Well, the principal item, of course, was provision, and the quantity would depend upon the number of individuals that composed the mess connected with each individual wagon. Some might want more and some less, but as a rule each owner of a team would plan to stock up with flour, sugar, coffee and tea, salt meat or bacon, fine salt and pepper and other substantials as his fancy might suggest, and sufficient to last for six months at least. In addition to provision, since ours was a mining enterprise, every man was supposed to own a pick, shovel and sheet-iron pan for panning gold, the tools he expected to use at the end of the journey. As before intimated, weapons for defence could be found in every wagon, and the men who composed the company knew full well how to use them when necessary.

THE INDIANS

It may be news to most of you that the Northwest suffered an outbreak of the Sioux Indians in 1862, Minnesota suffering most from the rising of the Red Men. After Gen. Sibley had them partially subdued the Legislature of the State of Minnesota put a bounty upon the head of every Sioux found within the limits of the state. This law had the effect of sending the

Red Men across the line at a double quick, and during our travel across Minnesota not an Indian did we see, but no sooner had we crossed the state line into Dakota than a camp of old Red Iron's band lay directly in our line of travel. They gave us no uneasiness, however, for they were at peace with the whites at this time.

We were often cautioned, however, by the older heads in our train not to kill wantonly, or waste the game taken by our hunters, our advisers urging that this would anger the Red Men, if the deed was discovered, more than any other one thing we might do. It must be admitted, though, that on some few occasions we quite disregarded that advice.

We often saw Indians while we were in Dakota and for quite a distance in Montana, and as a safety measure, after leaving Minnesota, picket guards were posted every night around our camp, when there seemed to be any danger of a surprise by the Indians. The pickets were posted at a distance of some fifteen rods from our wagons and about the same distance from one picket post to another, three men on a post and a three-hour watch for each man. My brother arranged the posting of these pickets, and selected the men to take their turns alternately, night after night.

Only twice did the Indians undertake to surprise us at night. On one occasion we were proceeding up the north side of the Missouri River, having passed a camp of Sioux the day before, and in the night we heard horses passing on a canter several rods behind our picket posts, and circling our encampment two or three times, and a voice from one of the riders shouted something in the language of his tribe, over and over again. It was the same voice, and the same words repeated, until, coming opposite one of our picket posts, and his body showing against the sky line, the watchful man on guard took a quick aim and fired. The result was a sharp yell from the Indian, and a rapid departure of his associates from the scene. We all lay for the rest of the night with our hands upon our rifles, but nothing further occurred that night to disturb us. However, it would have been rather risky for any of the sneaking cut-throats to invade the circle of our picket posts or break into our camp that night.

On another occasion, while we were traveling up the valley of the Milk River, we noticed during the afternoon, as we traveled, what appeared to be the heads of men on horseback far behind us, but thought little about it, supposing we had got beyond the usual range of the hunting grounds of the Indians. Feed for our cattle and horses was fine across the river, and our half-breed friends, who had been traveling with us for several hundred miles, took a bunch of their horses across the creek, and outside our picket posts, and picketed the animals for the night. Under the cover of darkness the Indians cut the ropes and stampeded seven of the horses toward the mountains. As soon as it was light enough to follow the trail they were pursued, but the start they had got was too great, and the red rascals got away with the seven fine horses.

A rather ludicrous incident happened one night. The silence of our camp was broken by a single shot from one of our picket posts, and every man reached for his rifle, but at daylight the man who had fired the shot came into view, dragging along a large timber wolf that had tried to sneak into camp after meat.

We crossed the trail of a good many parties of squaws, dogs and pappooses moving from place to place, and the sight of these poor human beasts of burden could only arouse our pity. The squaws were dressed only in petticoat and moccasins, and the children were entirely naked.

I do not recollect ever seeing an Indian armed with the white man's weapons, and we were told that the Government imposed severe penalties upon anyone who assisted them in obtaining them. The bow and a bunch of arrows in a quiver, hung with deerskin across his shoulders, and a knife and tomahawk completed the Indian's equipment. The skill of the Indian boys with the bow and arrow was simply marvelous. At a distance of sixty feet or more they were almost sure to hit at every shot a piece of hardtack set in a split stick and stuck in the ground, and our supply of hardtack was soon in danger of exhaustion, as the contestant always slipped the morsel he had captured into his waiting mouth.

As a rule the different tribes with which we came in contact, Sioux, Gros Ventres, Blackfeet and Crows, were specimens of fine physical proportions, tall and straight, with bodies capable

of great endurance, but the development of muscle on the arms and limbs seemed to be lacking. They were skillful horsemen too and with only a rope to control them would send an arrow straight to the mark firing under their horses' necks, their bodies to all appearances fairly glued to the backs of their mounts.

The Indians we encountered while crossing the plains did not seem to have any moral sense. They would steal almost anything they could lay their hands on, and we had to watch out closely whenever any of them came into camp at our noon rest, to see that they were kept away from the wagons. We could not blame them much, as they had never been taught to do better.

On one occasion my brother thought to give a few of them a little treat. Motioning them to sit down in a circle, he took a large pan of biscuits I had baked that morning in our little sheet-iron stove, and reached it out to the chief, who, instead of taking out a biscuit, seized the pan and poured the entire contents into his blanket, giving a grunt of satisfaction at the generosity of the white man, and the rest of the group seemed to take it as a matter of course. To ease the situation a little a pipe was produced and filled with tobacco, and passed around from one to the other as a pipe of peace, which seemed to satisfy the circle that everything was all right between them and their white brother, as well as the rest of us. As to who ate the biscuits that were folded in the blanket of the chief, does not yet appear.

After entering the then Territory of Dakota we ascended to a tableland, at that time known as the "Coté de Prairie," a French name, I judge, and the land to the west was what might be called rolling prairie, neither a dead level nor yet hilly, the land seeming to rise in gentle swells as far as the eye could reach.

After entering Dakota our course bore northwest until we reached the James River. Then we continued up the eastern bank until we passed the head waters of that stream and then bore more directly toward the west. It was estimated by some of those in the train that we were about 15 or 20 miles south of Devil's Lake, quite a large body of water some 20 miles long by from 5 to 15 miles wide but very irregular in its conformation. After passing the head waters of the James we purposed to strike the big bend of the Missouri River, which we reached

near Fort Berthold on the north bank of that stream. To those of you who have never seen or read about this remarkable river, I might say its waters look like those of any of our own streams after a heavy fall of rain, for one would think at first that it was in the flood stage. It looks the same, however, day after day after taking in the waters of the Milk River, which enters the Missouri from the north some 500 miles above Fort Berthold. The Milk River runs through a light-colored, clayey soil that washes easily and the waters which mingle with the Missouri are sufficiently impregnated with this light-colored clay to carry the same shade the entire length below until its waters reach the Mississippi, and the force of the stream as it enters the father of waters is sufficient to color its waters nearly across to the Illinois side, about 20 miles above St. Louis.

The most remarkable physical characteristics about that part of the Dakotas over which our route lay were the absence of all kinds of timber, its many alkali lakes, and the frequency of the vision of the mirage, which appeared on many different occasions, usually about 10 or 11 o'clock A. M. There would appear in the distance a body of water surrounded by trees, usually with cattle standing around the banks. As we proceeded the vision seemed to recede and finally disappeared altogether, a sore disappointment to the tired and thirsty traveler who had hoped to find rest and refreshment under the shade of the trees. The alkali lakes were small bodies of water, covering only a few acres, very shallow and literally alive with wild fowl, ducks, sand-hill cranes, wild geese and several other smaller varieties of birds that frequent the regions where water abounds. Of course with our shooting irons at hand we had many a feast of wild fowl for dinner while we were in the vicinity of those small bodies of water. But, you inquire, how could you cook them with no wood to make a fire? We gathered what was called in that country buffalo chips, which were dry as tinder and burned readily, making an excellent fuel for our purpose.

THE BUFFALO

At just what period of Continental history it had its flood tide is not known, but seventy years ago this greatest game asset the world had, or will have again, roamed at will across the limitless prairies of the great unsettled West.

We are told that indications of the presence of buffalo were visible, not many years ago, as far east as western New York, and that even to this day in every state lying between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains their saucer-shaped wallowing places are discernible.

The habits of these animals were somewhat migratory. In the autumn they would move southward toward a warmer climate, and as winter began to soften into the milder weather of spring, they would slowly but surely return to their feeding grounds of the previous summer, and this process had undoubtedly been repeated for centuries before the rifle of the white hunter awoke the echoes of these vast meadowlands, and startled these denizens from their hitherto undisputed possession of these fertile reaches of virgin soil.

The buffalo were sometimes obliged to defend themselves against the attack of other wild animals, notably prairie and timber wolves, which swarm in great numbers in unsettled countries abounding in game. Like the caribou, the males of the buffalo would form a guard around the calves and weaker females, and woe to that wolf whose unappeased hunger tempted him to break through the ranks of lowered heads, and glittering black eyes, that held the yelping, snarling crowd at bay.

The herd always had a leader, acknowledged by all the others as the king of the herd, until by reason of advancing age or bodily disability, he was displaced by some other more stalwart and vigorous. The vanquished leader then betook himself to some place remote from all companions and fell an easy prey to a band of wolves, or to the roving Redman, who wasted no time before gathering in this convenient auxiliary to his depleted larder.

But the westward march of the white man, with the modern firearms, has swept these vast herds of wild cattle from the western prairies. The whistle of the locomotive, and the smoke of the steam thresher, no longer frighten these creatures, which for centuries, how many no man can tell, furnished the chief supply of animal food for the Redmen of the great Middle West of the North American continent. Outside of the Government reservations in Wyoming, and a few private game preserves, they have been swept from the face of the continent

by the resistless law of the "survival of the fittest." In many instances they were wantonly slaughtered and wasted, but we must be resigned by the thought that a better and more useful breed of cattle is now occupying the soil.

We saw many signs of buffalo during our trip across Dakota, their wallowing places being saucer-shaped where they had stood and pawed out the earth in sport or in battle between the male animals. Besides, we frequently came across their skulls and the large bones of the limbs, but until we were fully entered into Montana we saw no herds of buffalo. If you have read Cooper's *Leather Stocking Tales*, especially his book entitled "The Prairie," you have some idea of what it means to see a herd of buffalo.

Some time near the middle of July we came to the bank of a small creek, that rose somewhere north of us in Canada, and flowing southerly emptied its waters into the Missouri. Our train crossed this stream one Sunday morning and camped for the rest of the day to give our weary cattle a little comfort. After the train had got across, and, by the way, this was the first stream of water we had encountered since we left the head waters of the James in the eastern part of Dakota about 500 miles to the east of us, I ascended a bluff near the bank of the creek and took a look to the west and northwest. It looked as if the next day's travel would surely bring us to timber of some sort, but the next day, pushing on to the west, about a mile from the north bank of the Missouri River we discovered that what we had seen were buffalo in small groups of twenty, forty, or fifty, feeding upon the bunch grass which was plenty in that region. This was Monday morning. During the entire week, or until Saturday, we were traveling with that immense herd of wild cattle, mainly to the north of us, but ahead and behind as we moved, the grazing herd was always in sight. As night came on, and as the day began to dawn the roar of ten thousand throats filled the air, like the roar of Niagara. Fresh buffalo meat was present at every meal, and we had the pick if we were near enough to the creature to select young and tender meat. The buffalo would allow a hunter to approach to within about 200 yards, when they would move off and commence feeding again unless pursued.

This then was the forest I had seen the morning I took observations from the bluff by the river.

We had picked up in our travel across Dakota two families of French and Indian halfbreeds, whose home when not on the prairie was in Pembina, near the northeast corner of Dakota, and whose business it was to hunt buffalo for their meat and hides. They traveled in two-wheeled wooden carts drawn by a horse, a cow, or an ox, just as seemed most convenient. They had with them their wives and children, some of them half-grown, and able to handle the carts. While we were passing through this vast herd the two men who controlled the half-breed outfit made what they called a run for the hides and meat of the buffalo. They were mounted on fine race horses, one of them a beautiful bay brought to this country from the race tracks of England, and carried what was known as the Henry rifle, a magazine gun, sixteen-shot and a rapid loader.

Just as our train was about to start one morning, and in full view of us all, they mounted their horses and made a dash at the herd that lay ahead of us. The buffalo soon started up, but the fleet-footed horses overtook them and the rifles of the keen sportsmen began to bark as the fatal shots were planted just behind the shoulders of the fleeing animals. When the dust and smoke had blown away, eleven dead buffalo lay stretched upon the ground, and it was only a short time before the women and the older boys and girls in the carts had finished their work of skinning them, and securing all that was valuable of the eleven dead buffalo.

One might think it an easy job to ride thus into a herd of frightened, terrified wild animals and, in a space of time not to exceed five minutes at most, secure so many valuable prizes as trophies of the chase. To a disinterested witness of the event it might seem of no great note, but just you mount and try it once, even once, and you will be perfectly satisfied to "let George do it." The horse and the rider must both be trained to that kind of sport, and even then it is attended with great danger. The horse must be accustomed to the discharge of fire-arms under the saddle, and at the proper moment when the shot is delivered into the body of the buffalo, must shear quickly away so as to avoid the sharp horns of the infuriated beast.

Often they turn quickly upon the hunter and his horse, and deliver a counter-blow, and if they succeed in planting their short black horns under the horse's flank most likely the horse is disemboweled, and the hunter may also sustain broken bones or even death itself. Nothing of that sort happened to our skillful hunters and both rode back to their families safe and sound, though their horses were panting from the sudden burst of speed necessary to do their part of the bloody work.

OTHER GAME AND FRUITS

After leaving that vast herd of buffalo we saw no more of that kind of animal. Several miles farther along, however, we entered the valley of the Milk River before mentioned, which is a stream of considerable size, and at that time might well have been termed the Hunter's Paradise. The river was sparsely timbered along its banks, almost entirely by cottonwoods, and the deer were so plentiful that game paths were worn into the soil inches deep where they had traveled up and down the banks. One would have to go quietly for only a short distance in order to see one or more of the creatures, which were so unaccustomed to the hunter and the report of his rifle that they seemed to be almost fearless of man. In the swales along the banks where the water set back at certain seasons and the soil remained soft and muddy, bear tracks were plenty. We spent no time, however, hunting bear, but did give a little attention to venison, which helped out our meat supply not a little. Back from the river antelope were abundant and quite easily taken.

The way we would hunt them was to approach a herd cautiously and if possible without being discovered, lie close to the ground, and elevate a bandanna handkerchief on a stick or ramrod so that the antelope could see it and not see the hunter. These little animals, unlike any of the other varieties, are possessed of a large bump of curiosity, so after a few moments of watching they would begin to travel back and forth, drawing a little nearer the red flag every time, apparently exercising great caution, but in fact walking steadily into danger. When they were in easy rifle range the hunter could select the one he wanted and knock him over. Their flesh is fine, something like venison or mutton with a gamey flavor.

During our trip across Dakota, and a large part of Montana, we found the prickly pear in abundance and of several different varieties. The blossoms, in beautiful shades of pink, make of it a lovely flower garden, but the terrible spines that cover the body of the plant, make it extremely unpleasant to handle, or even touch. Another shrub we often met was known to plainsmen as the bullberry. Its fruit was edible but extremely acid to the taste. However, having a diet composed mainly of bread and meat, we often improved the opportunity afforded us to eat quantities of this currant-like fruit.

There was another plant called by the older of the plainsmen "pomme de terre," apple of the earth, the French name for potato. This was a small plant that kept close to the ground, and bore a small round fruit without much flavor, resembling in appearance and taste the common potato ball, often met with in years past in our New England potato fields. These small earth plums or apples, falsely so-called, with a kind of small prairie turnip, furnished food for bears and wolverines, which would dig and eat them, for the want of something better.

When we entered the Milk River valley we found wild yellow currants in abundance, but the bears claimed them as a delicacy of their own. They grew a much larger fruit than any currant I have ever seen in any of our Eastern gardens, and the flavor was very fine, for a currant.

Along the banks of the Missouri the shad or June berry was frequently met, and in all respects similar to the wild fruit known to all New England.

THE GOLD FIELDS

From the time we started in Minnesota until we reached the valley of the Prickly Pear River and the city of Helena upon the western side of it, we were on the road about 100 days and covered a distance of some 1300 miles, and without the loss of a man. Helena, now the capital of the State of Montana, was at that time the largest and most populous place in the Territory, and fairly in the gold fields of the Territory.

The Prickly Pear Valley, a level territory some ten miles across in almost any direction, forms only a very insignificant part of the mineral resources of Montana, but it so happened that in 1866, some of the best paying deposits, both of quartz

and placer-mining, had been located upon the mountain fringe which borders the west side of the valley. Even Helena City was located upon good placer-mining ground, and at the time I mention was being dug up and washed for fine gold.

There were at the time of which I write three different methods of separating the gold from the soil or gravel, or from the ledges of rock or quartz, where it might be found imbedded. The gold was usually washed from the gravel by the use of sluice boxes or cradles, and if quartz ledges were discovered, mills (so-called) were erected to crush the rock. The gold was freed from the stone and caught with quicksilver, which was afterwards disposed of by holding the pan in which the amalgam was placed over the fire, when the quicksilver would evaporate, and the gold alone be left in the pan.

The sluice boxes were usually made of twelve-foot boards about one foot wide. They had only three sides, and in the bottom was placed another board bored full of holes, making a false bottom, and carefully wedged in, not nailed, so that it could be removed when it was thought necessary to clean up and secure the gold after the day's run. From three to five or six of these boxes were placed one after the other, in a string, the upper end of each box receiving the lower end of the one above, then a small stream of water, about one inch deep in the bottom of the boxes, was let in at the upper end of the line. The miner then proceeded to shovel the gold-bearing gravel into the upper end of box number one. The water carried it down to the lower end of the last box, where it was removed by another workman, while the gold, being too heavy to be washed away, would sink into the riffles, or holes, in the false bottom of the boxes, and later on be secured by the miner.

The cradle, so called because of its resemblance to the baby's first bed, was a small affair operated by one man. An upright stick or handle was held by the miner to jog it back and forth, and the bottom sloped so that the water poured on to the gravel at one end would carry away the base material, and the gold, being heaviest, would remain upon the bottom of the cradle, to be scooped up and secured by the miner. In all the various methods of separating the gold from the soil or rock, water, and plenty of it, has to be used.

We pilgrims, or tenderfeet, as new-comers in that region were called, did not waste any time in getting busy with the enterprise that had brought us there. A claim was secured, and everybody went to work, but the season was so far advanced that very little was accomplished before freezing weather put a stop to further proceedings. When spring opened and the ground was clear of frost, work was recommenced upon the ground bought the fall before; but, as one might naturally suppose, disappointment was the lot of quite a number of those who had lived through the long cold winter in anticipation of gathering in the golden harvest when spring opened. Yet all was not lost so long as health and strength remained.

Work in the mines was plenty and wages of from five to six dollars in gold were paid to all who cared to work. Most of those who had crossed the plains knew how to cook after a fashion and board themselves, so that the living was not very expensive, but board of the plainest kind could not be secured for less than one dollar per day. The city, so-called, was the abode of gamblers and their associates of the weaker sex, with whom decent men did not care to associate. Usually anyone who minded his business and kept straight himself, could avoid trouble, but it did not take long to see trouble if one was looking for it. While a crude idea of justice and fair play was the rule among the miners, rights were secured and safety guaranteed largely by the policeman which most men carried when away from their own camps, in a holster fastened to a belt over the right hip.

HOME VIA THE MISSOURI RIVER

This kind of a life was not congenial to the law firm of Peck & Brown and some others, and before the summer was over plans were laid to return to the States. It was finally decided, all things considered, that in a suitable boat, large enough to carry six men with a reasonable amount of baggage and provision, the trip might be made by water. Since our last mining camp was on the west bank of the Missouri River, we decided to build our boat and launch it upon the water at that place, which was about ten miles east of Helena City.

If the reader will take his atlas covering the different sections of the Northwest and follow me, what I have to say will be much more interesting. The following notes are taken almost verbatim from my diary, kept from the time we started on our return trip until we arrived at St. Louis.

In 1854, according to authentic United States history, or during the administration of Thomas Jefferson as President of the United States, an expedition was fitted out for the purpose of exploring the Northwest Territory, lately purchased by this country from France. This expedition was the Lewis and Clark exploring expedition, under the command of Captain Lewis and Lieutenant Clark. These men with their associates ascended the Missouri river and crossed the Rocky Mountains, reaching the Columbia, down which they continued their journey to the Pacific Ocean. On our return trip from the gold fields of Montana, we retraced their course down the Missouri River, which is formed by the forking of the Madison and Jefferson Rivers coming out of the mountains many miles to the west, and some distance above where we put our boat into the water.

On the twenty-fifth day of August, 1867, I closed the cabin door behind me for the last time, in Big Indian gulch, about two miles southwest of Helena City, and with my little pack of goods thrown over my shoulder, started for the "French Bar," so-called, a mining camp located on the west bank of the Missouri, on the east side of Prickly Pear Valley. My brother had been stopping for some time at this camp, which was about ten miles from Helena, assisting in the construction of the little craft, twenty-six feet long and six feet wide, that was designed to carry six of us safely down the river and back once more to railroad travel.

August twenty-sixth we embarked in our staunch little craft, which was provided with two sets of oars, and a main mast to which we could attach a sail if the wind was favorable, and keep the boat still moving at a reasonable rate when the current of the stream was too slow.

The first night we encamped on the bank near the mouth of the little Prickly Pear River, which enters the Missouri from the west. There seemed to be quite a current to the Missouri here and we estimated that we had made about twenty-five miles.

The second day we camped at night with some men who had been cutting logs for the purpose of building a fort on the Sun River, another tributary of the Missouri coming in from the west. This stream is called the Sun because of the clearness and purity of its water. It flows in about as much volume as Otter Creek, one of the main streams of our own state, and is so limpid and clear that the bottom can be clearly seen at a depth of seven feet or more.

The third day of our journey we entered and passed through what was known as the Gate of the Mountains. This was an undertaking not unlike passing through Hell Gate, at the entrance of New York harbor, so called mainly because of the danger to navigation from the agitation of the water. And be it known to all other travelers who essay to pass through the Gate of the Mountains in a small open boat, at a time of low water, as at the time of year when we entered it, that if they get through without wrecking their craft, or getting a cold dip, they will be extremely fortunate.

We were all ignorant of what was in store for us when we entered the gorge, but to turn back was impossible. The rocks on either bank rose perpendicularly from the water's edge from fifty to one hundred and fifty feet, and the water ran like a mill race. Our pilot, who sat in the stern of the boat, did the best he could to keep the boat off the rocks and in the deepest part of the channel, but we were caught once upon a flat rock in midstream, which was covered by only a few inches of water. One man had to step out at the stern and lift and swing the boat to ease it off the rock, jump in, and let her drive again. Towards the mouth of the canyon the water went along with an extra rush, and our boat seemed to be first one end up then the other, but we struck no more rocks, and just below the worst of the rapids the water was calm and still as a lake, and continued deep and quiet for several miles. The stream through the gorge, or gate, so-called, is some fifteen or twenty rods wide, and all the water that is drained into the river above is forced into that narrow channel, which is perhaps five miles long. Below the gate the stream is probably forty rods wide, and flows for several miles through a level stretch of land with banks from ten to fifteen feet high much of the way. But occasionally the shore

would be low and sandy, sometimes bordered by a growth of alders or willows.

This section of the river seemed to be the abode of plenty of large game, for on two occasions they revealed themselves to us, soon after we left the gorge. A small band of elk, perhaps ten in number, came down to the bank of the stream on the opposite side from where we were encamped, and about fifty rods up the river but in plain sight. Apparently they intended to swim across, but the steep bank on the opposite side looked too discouraging, and they turned back and were soon out of sight. On the morning of the third day while we were in this deep, slow-moving stretch of the river, we rounded a bend in the stream and saw a large grizzly bear standing on the bank, and evidently intending to try to swim over. We eased up on the oars and in breathless silence watched the movements of this monarch of the mountains. We had not long to wait, for in a moment the bear entered the water and struck out for the opposite bank, only the top of his head and the huge shoulders visible above the water. He was then probably fifty rods from us. We waited until he had nearly reached the middle of the river, then with both sets of oars struck the water, determined to capture him before he could reach the shore. The noise of our oars as they struck the water alarmed him, and he turned quickly back towards the place where he had entered the water. Lucky indeed was it for us, land-lubbers, that the bear won the race, for had we caught up with him in the water the chances would have all been in his favor. Most likely he would have swamped the boat and drowned several of us. As he rose up on the bank not more than five or six rods from us, he was a splendid mark, and the writer picked up the only loaded gun in the boat and fired quickly. The boat was unsteady and my aim not sure, but the ball must have struck him, for his body settled, but only for an instant, when he rallied, turned and rushed into the underbrush out of sight. I was anxious to land and pursue him, but the motion was overruled as not being advisable, under the circumstances, and without further delay we again took to our oars.

The same day we reached the upper falls of the river, which must have been fifteen feet high, but as the water was low on

the north side of the stream, six strong men were able to unload the boat and ease it down and into the water again without any accident. This we did at four different times in the next mile or so, and finally encamped for the night, ignorantly supposing that the worst of our hardship was past.

In the morning, soon after starting, we turned a bend in the river, and knew a still higher fall was below us. We could see the mist as it arose from the fall of water, and the roar was distinct upon our ears. Fastening our boat to the shore, we passed down to examine more carefully, and to our regret and sorrow discovered the Great Falls of the Missouri, a perpendicular drop of nearly one hundred feet with steep, precipitous banks on either side, and no possible way to get our boat up the bank or around the falls. A council of war was called, and all agreed that we must abandon our boat, and with what baggage and provision we could comfortably carry, set out on foot for Fort Benton, which we knew must be somewhere below us on the river.

We started next morning, the fifth since we had commenced our journey, following the main course of the river. We traveled all day with the reassuring conviction that we were at least traveling towards home, and down grade, and that night reached a point called the portage road, which was traveled by the stage between Fort Benton and Helena City. Early next morning, September first, we renewed our march, and arrived at Fort Benton that night, as tired and dusty a crowd of six as could well be called together. By careful inquiry at the Fort, together with what had been taught us by our experience, we were satisfied that we had covered two hundred and fifty miles since we left French Bar. Fifty miles were on foot and the rest of the way by water.

Great Falls, Montana, is now one of the largest and most important cities in the state, numbering, according to the census of 1900, 14,931 people, and today probably not less than 25,000. It has one of the largest plants in the state for reducing gold, silver and copper ore, and a water-power second only to Niagara.

We engaged passage on the "Only Chance," a small river steamboat lying at Fort Benton, the last boat to leave the head

of navigation during the season for the accommodation of any who might wish to go down the river at that late season of the year. We were delayed until the 6th of September, when, with some fifty passengers on board, the boat headed downstream for St. Louis, 2,750 miles away by the river channel, though much nearer by direct line. During the first part of our trip the "Only Chance" would stop at night and tie to some tree on shore, the captain not daring to run after dark for fear of snags and sand bars.

On September 13th, about noon, we reached Fort Hawley. This was a post established by the Northwestern American Fur Company for the purpose of trading with the Indians, and had a stockade for defense. Three men had been killed by the Indians, near this post, only a few days before, and to me all the savage and brutal instincts of this fiendish race seemed manifest. We heard the story of one of the men who had been killed when cutting hay for the post. He wandered ten miles through the woods after they got through with him, before death came to his relief. The brutal treatment dealt out to this white man near Fort Hawley is not printable, but the worst imaginable would scarcely be up to the facts.

September 21st we reached Fort Buford, at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, and old Fort Union, about five miles below. Fort Union consisted of several adobe buildings and stockades, with the tents of five companies of United States Infantry stationed there. The place had an inviting appearance as viewed from the river, but once entered, the streets were far from inviting. Half-breeds and Indians were racing their ponies back and forth, and the soldiers not on duty were lounging around, apparently indifferent as to what was going on about them.

From Cow Island, about five hundred miles below Fort Benton and on to Fort Union two hundred miles below, we found game in abundance, deer, elk and buffalo.

I have mentioned before that all through this dangerous portion of the river we had to tie up our boat at night, and run only by daylight. Those of us who were hunters usually took advantage of the little daylight that was left after the boat stopped for the night to hustle for fresh meat on shore, in case

we were fortunate enough to secure it. I will relate a single instance of this kind.

The boat had been going for hours one afternoon through a herd of buffalo that had commenced their annual southern migration to escape the cold weather on these northern plains. Many animals could be seen from time to time swimming the river. But the captain was not disposed to halt in order to accommodate the sportsmen, and no one felt justified in shooting the animals in the water, and leaving them a total waste and loss. Some half-dozen of us, therefore, with our rifles in our hands, were waiting patiently for the boat to halt for the night, as we were determined to secure some of this splendid game. Accordingly the boat had barely touched bottom, when the sportsmen, who had been waiting at least an hour for the opportunity, sprang from the boat to the shore, with a vigorous leap. A fine specimen of the herd we had observed all the afternoon had placed himself on a bluff upon the same side of the river to which our boat was tied, and seemed to be trying to satisfy his curiosity as to what was going on. The writer, with a Sharps army rifle had fortunately struck a game path that led from the river back through the alder and willow underbrush. Reaching the upper bank of the stream he was in easy rifle range of this splendid specimen of his herd. Dropping quickly to an easy rest he fired and the animal fell, but immediately got to his feet and turned around, swinging his head so that his keen eyes could discover where the trouble came from. Another shot was lodged in his side near the first, and he fell the second time, not to rise again. A quick run around the head of the coulé which separated the hunter from his game, and a third shot that penetrated the skull finished the job, and in less than fifteen minutes twenty men were busy skinning and cutting up the carcass, and before dark it was loaded on the boat, where any that cared for it might help themselves.

September 22nd, Sunday, toward evening, a Mrs. Barbour breathed her last on board the boat, after an illness of about ten days. She left a husband and three small children to mourn her loss. We reached Fort Berthold about 2 p. m., September 23rd, and stopped to pay the last tribute of respect to the deceased.

At nine that evening we reached Fort Stephenson, about twenty-five miles below Berthold, but were not permitted to land by order of Col. Powell, P. C., and therefore drew off and anchored in the river. His reason for not allowing us to land he did not disclose, but the presumption was that he feared some of his men might desert and secrete themselves on our boat.

September 24th, passed the steamer *Amanda* about nine a. m. and passed and were passed by her several times that day. At eight in the evening she repassed us as we were tied up for the night.

We reached Fort Rice the next morning about eight, stopped two hours and took on the corpse of Capt. Marshall of Indiana. At three o'clock the little son of one of the passengers died on the boat. Several others are sick.

September 26th, a month had elapsed since we commenced our journey home and only about one-half of the distance had as yet been covered. At five we reached Fort Sully, a military post of some importance situated on a high bluff about a mile from the left bank of the river and four miles from the landing. A band of Yankton Indians was encamped on the river bottom. Four companies of soldiers were stationed at Fort Sully. Here the child that had died yesterday was buried.

September 29th, in the afternoon, we met the following steamboats bound up the river, the *Benton*, the *Ameranth*, the *Lady Grace*, and the *Amelia Poe*.

We were making more rapid progress now that there seemed to be less danger from snags and sand bars, but the next day, on account of a strong head wind, we lay over from ten in the morning until noon.

October 1st, we stopped at Fort Randall early in the forenoon, and at six p. m. reached Yankton, the capital of Dakota Territory, situated about fifteen miles above the mouth of the James River. This was the first settlement of any importance we had seen as we descended the Missouri River. About twenty of the passengers and crew of the *Only Chance* got beastly drunk at this place, most likely rejoicing in celebration of their escape from the wilderness above them. Nobody was arrested.

October 3rd, we reached Sioux City, Iowa, at eight a. m. This is a place of about 3,000 inhabitants (at that time), pleas-

antly located at the mouth of the Big Sioux River. According to the captain's chart we made one hundred miles that day, and tied up our boat for the night.

October 4th, we reached Omaha, Nebraska, at three o'clock p. m. Across the river stands Council Bluffs, Iowa. These two rival cities are about twenty miles above the mouth of the Platte River, which enters the Missouri from the west, and by the river eight hundred and thirty miles above St. Louis. Omaha then had 12,000 inhabitants. The Union Pacific Railroad was then completed to some four hundred and fifty miles west of Omaha.

October 5th, about noon, we passed Nebraska City, a place of considerable importance about seven hundred and twenty miles above St. Louis. We were counting the miles now, and the *Only Chancee* was under full head of steam night and day.

October 6th, at two p. m., we reached the city of St. Joseph, Missouri, usually known as St. Jo., a large place said to contain some 23,000 people, located on the left bank of the Missouri River about six hundred miles above St. Louis. The country bordering the river between Council Bluffs and St. Jo was quite thickly settled, the timber along the river being mainly elm, ash and cottonwood.

October 8th, we passed Jefferson, the capital city of Missouri, and about half-past three o'clock in the afternoon of October 11th we reached St. Louis, the end of our boat ride on the waters of the Missouri, the longest river in North America. Continuing to the mouth of the Mississippi, the Missouri can perhaps be counted the longest river in the world.

Forty-seven days from the time the writer had shouldered his personal effects in Big Indian Guleh, we boarded a train of cars in St. Louis with our tickets routed for home.

No bridge crossed the Mississippi at that time, but our cars were run on a large ferry steamer that carried us safely across to the solid ground of the state of Illinois. Passing through Springfield, where sleeps our martyred President, we sped on toward Chicago, and continued our journey by rail

until the Green Mountains were sighted in the east, and the joy-bells were set ringing in our hearts. We were soon to greet the loved ones at home once more, October 15th, 1867, with a new conception of the magnitude of this wonderful country, of which we Eastern people form so small a part.

